Welcome to the first SERUpdate for 2007. The Special Education Resource Unit (SERU) has had a number of staff changes. John McCourt has won the position of Project Officer Information and Communication Technology and has settled well into the role. Jan Kenney is acting in the Assistant Manager role with a major focus on reviewing the Negotiated Education Plan (NEP). Jan has already consulted a number of people across the department, advocates and parents. You will find a NEP feedback sheet within this edition. If you are a parent or a teacher of a child or student with disabilities in a department site and would like to provide feedback on the NEP, please return the enclosed sheet to SERU by Friday 11th May 2007.

Alister Davies left SERU at the end of 2006. Thank you to Alister for his work at SERU over the last 6 years and best wishes for his new endeavours.

The Special Education Resource Unit (SERU) is part of the Department of Education and Children’s Services (DECS).

SERU provides a number of specialised services which support children and students with disabilities and learning difficulties access, participate and achieve in the curriculum.

SERU provides a range of specialised equipment to Department sites to be used by staff and students:
- Access Equipment, including lifting hoists and wheelchair ramps
- Assistive Technology, including computers, alternative keyboards and software
- OHS Equipment, including adjustable office equipment
- Audiological Equipment, including soundfield systems.

The specialised services available through SERU include:
- Audiological Records
- Communication and Language Disorder Support Service
- Conductive Education
- Early Intervention Service—Hearing Impaired
- Speech and Guidance Resources
- Transport Assistance.

Further information on these services is available on our website at: http://web.seru.sa.edu.au/index.html

At the core of SERU is our curriculum and professional resource collection. This is the focus of this term’s SERUpdate.

Ruth Motley—Manager

Established in April 1975, the Special Education Resource Unit (SERU) was the brainchild of special education director Ted Lasscock, who appointed American special education teacher and librarian Larry Berke to create a toy library for children and students with disabilities.
From a simple toy library 32 years ago, SERU has developed into a leading professional resource service for South Australians who support children with disabilities and learning difficulties.

The resource centre, located on the Fulham Gardens Primary School site at Henley Beach, provides a rich source of curriculum resources, professional reference texts and assessment materials that are available for loan. SERU is now opened during school holidays as well as during term time.

The resource collection however is much more than the sum of its parts. Behind it are a dedicated team of teachers and administrative officers. SERU’s teachers, with both many years of experience and special education qualifications, provide an invaluable source of professional advice and expertise for the many teachers, school services officers and parents that borrow resources from the centre.

The resources can be borrowed in one of three ways:
1. Borrowers can visit SERU at its Henley Beach site and peruse the resources themselves or talk with the teacher on duty who will provide expert advice.
2. Contact SERU by phone to talk with the teacher on duty and to request resources.
3. Become an online borrower and browse our online database.

All our resources are annotated and you can search by key word or title. Registered borrowers can email the items you would like to borrow. For department employees, resources will then be sent out to sites by courier. For other borrowers, resources can be booked and put aside until they can get in to pick them up.

The resource collection has often been described as a ‘gold mine’ by many borrowers. The extensive range of resources has been carefully selected to meet the needs of a diverse group of learners from Birth to Year 12. The curriculum resources support each of the learning areas in the South Australian Curriculum, Standards and Accountability (SACSA) framework.

To ensure a balanced collection, criteria for selection include the:
- Different learning styles supported by the resource
- Range of senses stimulated by the resource
- Relevance to current and future curriculum
- Appropriateness – age/emotional development, social and cultural development, ability levels
- Accuracy and currency of content
- Authority and reputation of authors, producers or publishers
- Structure and accessibility of information
- Diversity – representing various views
- Department’s priorities
- Degree to which the material is likely to be controversial.

An Online Resource Annotation

Curriculum Resources

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- Department’s priorities
- Degree to which the material is likely to be controversial.
The resources enable inclusive teaching and learning practices and come in a range of formats including:

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<tr>
<th>Kits</th>
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<td>Games</td>
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<td>Packs of books</td>
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<td>Cards</td>
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<td>Learning activity packages</td>
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**Professional Texts**

The professional text collection, including videos and DVD’s, provides a wide range of disability and learning difficulties information covering Birth to Year 12. The texts provide practical strategies, research information and specific disability information for educators and parents/caregivers. The collection is continually updated to ensure it includes current local, national and international initiatives and trends.
Journals
The SERU journal collection has a focus on special education and aims to cover a broad range of international, national and local educational research.

The collection is regularly reviewed and updated. Every year a survey is carried out to identify journals that are no longer as relevant or popular with clients, and to look at suggestions for additions to the collection. Suggestions are received from SERU staff and borrowers.

Educators can access the journal collection by visiting SERU or through the Current Awareness process detailed in the following article.

Journals currently held are listed below:
- AASE Special Education Perspectives
- American Annals of the Deaf
- Autism Spectrum Disorder Quarterly
- Australian Journal of Early Childhood
- Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties
- Australian Journal of Special Education
- Australian Primary Mathematics Classroom
- British Journal of Special Education
- Catalyst
- Child Language, Teaching and Therapy
- Closing the Gap
- Exceptional Parent
- Independent Living
- International Journal of Disability, Development and Education
- Intervention in School and Clinic
- Journal of Early Intervention
- Journal of Special Education Technology
- Link
- PEN
- Phi Delta Kappan
- Professional Educator
- RAMPage
- Research Developments
- SET Research
- Support for Learning
- Teaching Exceptional Children
- Technical Aids for the Disabled
- Topics in Early Childhood

A range of Newsletters from Disability Organisations is also held at SERU.

Current Awareness
Those who are unable to drop into SERU to peruse the journal collection may choose to access the Current Awareness service. Journals from SERU’s collection are allocated to SERU staff who scan the journals and select suitable articles to read in depth and then write a brief summary of the article. These summaries make up a Current Awareness publication, sent out with the SERUpdate each term.

Readers can request up to four articles per term at no cost; any additional articles (including multiple copies) are $4.40 each. The order form is located in the front of the Current Awareness publication.

Alternatively, you can search and order online through the SERU website [http://web.seru.sa.edu.au](http://web.seru.sa.edu.au)

To get to the Current Awareness Database click on SERU Databases - direct link on the first page of SERU’s website.
Developmental Learning Centre (Toy Library)
The Developmental Learning Centre collection includes a range of play and active learning resources. These resources are grouped as follows:

- **Sensory Development (80) tactile, sensory stimulation**
  Materials designed to arouse different sensory responses through six memory systems: kinesthesia or sensitivity to movement, touch, vision and audition, smell and taste.

- **Sensory Motor Development (81) reward, sensory motor**
  Toys and resources that stimulate exploration through tactile and manipulative approaches.

- **Perceptual Development (82) matching, listening**
  Resources to assist learners to differentiate and classify stimuli according to colour, size, weight and so on, including simple matching, sorting and discrimination activities.

- **Perceptual Motor Development (83) play/eye hand coordination**
  Materials to encourage complex manipulation such as eye hand coordination and high levels of discrimination.

- **Motor (84) gross motor**
  Materials to develop gross motor skills and motor activity.

- **Conceptual and Abstract Reasoning (85) concept development, thinking skills, memory**
  Resources to encourage knowledge of concepts and classification. This section includes games with rules.

- **Self-help Skills (86) body concept**
  Materials to develop self management skills.

- **Socio-dramatic Play (62) make believe play**
  Materials to encourage socio-dramatic make believe play and role playing.

- **Music (69)**
  Musical instruments, cassette tapes/DVDs including relaxation.
Specialised and Adapted Resources—Switches and switch resources are useful for learners as a first step towards interacting with their environment and initiating learning.

They can be a precursor to activities relating to daily living, mobility and computer access, reinforcing the concept of cause and effect by providing rewards for switch operation (eg light noise, music or vibration).

SERU has recently updated our switch adapted resources. SERU staff had great fun processing the Dancing Banana in Pyjamas, the Move and Speak Homer Simpson, the Big Blue Boohba and many others.

These resources are a restricted loan.

Assessments
SERU has a comprehensive collection of screening and assessment tools. Centre and School staff can borrow a maximum of two tools for up to two weeks. Screening and assessment tools can provide useful information about a particular child or student and help inform teacher’s planning and programming. They are best viewed as one of a range of ways of gathering information to inform teachers about a child’s or student’s learning needs. It is important to consider inclusive and alternate strategies when gathering information on children and students with diverse needs.

The document Screening and Assessment Resource Guide - Early Years to Senior Years is an annotated guide of screening and assessment tools available at SERU. This guide was developed by DECS’ Learning Difficulties team and was distributed to all department schools in 2005. It can also be downloaded from SERU’s website.

References
Disability Awareness Information
The Curriculum and Professional Resources collection includes a range of information on local disability organisations including brochures related to Autism SA, Down Syndrome Association and so on. The Disability Information Resource Centre (DIRC) directory, which provides a comprehensive compendium of disability organisation and services in South Australia, is available for reference at SERU.

Two multimedia disability awareness packs are available for loan. The resources have been collated for educators to use to raise learner awareness of disabilities. Educators find these particularly useful when a new student who has a disability enrolls at the school. The packs include:
- A kit designed to raise awareness and positive attitudes of primary and lower secondary learners. Included are fact sheets, activities and information in the form of:
  - A CDROM related to vision impairment
  - Story books
  - An activities book
  - A disabled people set
  - A video and teachers book of activities
  - A board game
  - A disability organisation brochures pack.

SERU also has a range of disability awareness picture books/story books and videos/DVDs. The books relay stories about children with disabilities and provide information about the disability, for example: Daniel, a Boy with Down Syndrome; I Have Muscular Dystrophy; I Can’t Hear Like You; What Do You Know About People with Disabilities.

USING SERU RESOURCES

Practically Oral—A Workshop
The Communication and Language Disorder Support team, based at SERU have recently developed a workshop to support teachers, School Services Officers, and Early Childhood Workers develop the oral language skills in children and students essential for literacy development. The practical, ‘hands-on’ workshop provides opportunities to explore a range of activities and games using SERU resources. These games and activities are transferable to resources found in preschools and schools.

The workshop focuses on 8 areas for oral language development:
- Describing
- Story Telling
- Recounting and Reporting
- Discussing and Reasoning
- Vocabulary Development
- Active Listening and Following Instructions
- Asking and Answering Questions
- Social Interaction.

Describing
Descriptive language allows creativity and imagination but also assists in reporting perceptions and experiences in a comprehensive way. Children need to develop oral proficiency in describing because this leads on to critical areas in maths and sciences, for example, accurate description of attributes assists comparisons and categorisation.

Story telling
Sharing stories is one of the most important and rewarding things that teachers and children can do. Children’s ability to ‘tell a story’ reflects their growing life experiences and developing communication and thinking skills.
Oral story telling is an essential pre-cursor to the ability to write stories. Children will be more successful if given the opportunity for frequent practice using story prompts.

Recounting and reporting
Recounting and reporting occur naturally in many everyday situations both at home and at school. Although similar to story telling, the main purpose of a recount is to reconstruct past events in the order in which they occurred. Reporting involves telling facts or describing some aspect of the world. Both recounting and reporting are closely related to the describing genre.

Discussing and reasoning
Discussing and reasoning is dependent on the consolidation of earlier oral language skills which support children as they try new ideas and make new connections, hypothesise and compare alternatives. The ability to discuss, argue and reason allows children to think divergently, clarify ideas and revise what they say.

Vocabulary development
Children's vocabulary increases at an amazing rate – about 3000 words a year. However, in vocabulary development it is not only the size of a child's vocabulary but also the depth and complexity of vocabulary knowledge.

Active listening and following instructions
Active listening involves hearing and focussing attention on the verbal message and requires discriminating the relevant from the irrelevant information to gain meaning. To formulate a response, the information must be held in working memory long enough to process (this is often referred to as ‘executive function’).

Asking and answering questions
Questions are important for learning and to develop thinking strategies, social problem-solving and planning. Explicit teaching of a broad range of questions and how they are used is important to develop metacognitive skills which also facilitate reading comprehension and maths problem solving.

Social Interaction
Children starting school have a range of experiences in interacting with others, depending on their cultural or social background. To succeed in school, they must learn the rules of interaction in a school setting. Teachers need to be very explicit and clear about expectations in the classroom. Oral language games provide lots of opportunities to practice these skills.

REFERENCES

This is the second workshop in a series. The first is Oral Language in the Curriculum, which provides the theoretical background to oral language development.

Workshop dates
- Wednesday 30 May 2007—4.00 pm to 6.00 pm at SERU
- Wednesday 22 August 2007—4.00 pm to 6.00 pm at SERU.
We use SERU for many services:
- Transport assistance to get to and from school, the most common being access to a taxi
- ICT support and advice
- Specialised equipment for students with physical impairments
- Resources for teaching

Assistance from SERU through their resources library is invaluable for us. We are a small Unit with students from reception to year 13, and it is impractical for us to purchase the range of materials that we need for individual students and the curriculum we cover.

Several of our students need to use expensive sensory equipment and the school purchases items that we will use regularly. It is good to be able to borrow through SERU to ‘test drive’ anticipated purchases, and to provide a variety of items for students to experiment with. We do most of our teaching through different themes so we borrow equipment and materials such as toys, games, puzzles, music, no text/picture books. We also borrow black line masters which are useful when presenting concepts to secondary students an age-appropriate way. We often need to modify materials using more pictorial approaches but the ideas can be a stimulus for our preparation.

The staff at SERU is only a phone call away, and while we can borrow online, it is also good to speak to a friendly teacher who makes useful suggestions and follows up on requests. SERU have a good way of managing borrowers like us. Their sensible limit of 12 items per borrower reminds us to return items in a timely manner, so that we can borrow different items! Thanks SERU – you are very much appreciated by us.

Lib Bartholomeusz—Kadina Memorial High School
**NEW RESOURCES**

**Four Up, Smile Education.** 85-0627-01.
This pack of two-piece puzzle pieces, suitable for ages three and up, provides practice with early quantity concepts, sorting, matching, classifying, logical thinking and fine motor skills.

**Busy Buttons, Smile Education.** 83-1561-01.
This construction game can be used to produce three dimensional designs and develop fine motor skills, creative thinking, patterning, colour concepts, sensory awareness and classification.

**Hippets Puppet—Boys, Fiesta Crafts.** 62-0390-01.
These two fabric puppets representing boys can be used for sociodramatic play, body awareness/parts, language development, creativity and role play.

**Look and Listen Farm Puzzle and CD, Smile Education.** 82-0558-01.
This farm puzzle consists of 24 giant interlocking floor pieces and 12 inset pieces and includes a CD of related sounds. The puzzle pieces can be assembled without the insets in position. When placing the insets individually, the learners can be told or asked the names of the animals and what they might do on a farm. Listen to the CD to identify the sounds and then find the matching objects and animals in the puzzle.

**Hippets Puppet—Girls, Fiesta Crafts.** 62-0390-02.
These two fabric puppets representing girls can be used for sociodramatic play, body awareness/parts, language development, creativity and role play.

**Quartet, Smile Education.** 85-0628-01.
This pack of two-piece puzzles suitable for ages two and up contains four different learning activities—colour recognition; shape matching; common attributes; animal homes. The skills that can be developed include: association, vocabulary; observation skills; visual discrimination, matching and fine motor skills.

**Video—Reflections on Dyslexia.** 18-0159-01.
This video focuses on the lives of four people who live with dyslexia. They tell how their learning difficulty has steered the choices they have made, what has helped, and what has hurt along the way. They discuss the emotional issues behind dyslexia and how it has influenced their behaviour, opportunity, life choices and success.

**From What to Why Developing Children’s Thinking Skills Through Questions, DECS, 2006.** 61-0781-01.
This resource book provides general information about learners’ ability to understand and answer questions and explains how learners’ skills in responding to questions develop. The CD accompanying the resource book contains specific activity ideas for answering at four different levels of complexity.

**Literature and Learning—The Early Years—Australian Animals: Possum Magic, Kotros, J; Draper, M, 1997.** 63-3109-01.
This book designed to encourage learners to develop an interest in Australian animals and their environments, uses the models of Edward De Bono’s Six Thinking Hats, Bloom’s Taxonomy and Howard Gardener’s Multiple Intelligence theory. Based on Mem Fox’s Possum Magic, it contains individual lesson plans, reproducible activities and cross curriculum activities.
NEW RESOURCES

This comprehensive encyclopedia is a guide to the wide range of terminology related to autism spectrum disorders. It includes information on: assistive technology; curriculum materials; early detection; hereditary/environmental causes; research; sensory difficulties; daily living; interventions; medical issues; signs and symptoms.

Handwriting in the South Australian Curriculum, DECS, 2006. 40-0065-01.
This book replaces the previous Department of Education and Children’s Services publication Handwriting: South Australian Modern Cursive (1983). It locates handwriting in the curriculum, provides ideas for preschool and school educators, and advocates a whole-school approach to teaching handwriting.

What’s Next—Part 1, Creative Educational AIDS. 61-0792-01.
This memory game for one or more players aged 5 years and over is designed to develop logical thinking and story telling skills. The sequenced picture cards depict routine events, happenings, processes in the stories that are related to daily life and immediate surroundings.
See also: 61-0792-02—What’s Next—Part 2.

Ideas to Go—A Centre Approach to Thinking Skills, Rasmussen, G, 1995. 61-0785-01.
This book contains photocopiable activities primarily focused on visual/spatial and linguistic intelligences. In some cases, three or four versions of a central idea are presented. Contents include: Mystery Verbs/Nouns/Adjectives; True-False Fun; Catch the Dots; Things I Know (Maybe); Letter Starters; Silly Rhymes; Unfinished Sentences; Missing Letters; Which Way?; Be Art Smart; Finish It!

Handwriting in the South Australian Curriculum, DECS, 2006. 40-0065-01.
This book replaces the previous Department of Education and Children’s Services publication Handwriting: South Australian Modern Cursive (1983). It locates handwriting in the curriculum, provides ideas for preschool and school educators, and advocates a whole-school approach to teaching handwriting.

This manual, for educators and parents using visual strategies as an aid to learning, covers the curriculum areas of Mathematics, English, Society and Environment, Science and Life Skills.

This book, evolved around an explicit instruction model, shows educators how to build word-attack skills that assist learners to recognize patterns in English and understand how printed words and letters fit together.

This book provides ideas and information related to integrating augmentative and alternative communication into programs based on the principles of conductive education.

These two DVDs contain the Autism SA Adelaide seminar Inspiring and Informing presentation by Professor Tony Attwood. DVD-1 contains day one—Cognitive Abilities: A Different Way of Thinking and Learning Profile (2 hours 50 minutes). DVD-2 contains day two—Issues for Teenagers and Adults with Asperger Syndrome (2 hours 42 minutes); Managing Challenging Behaviour in Children with Autism (2 hours 28 minutes).

This DVD, narrated by a young boy, features early years learners demonstrating appropriate social skills in the context of school and is designed for learners with Autism, Asperger’s and learning delays.
This book contains 50 activities in the learning centre format which focus mainly on visual/spatial and linguistic intelligences. Contents include: Rhyme Time; About Our Room; A Look at a Book; Shipwrecked; What Does a Dog Know?; Thinking Links; Words About Circles; Wacky Patterns; A String Thing.

Build a Sentence Part 1: Subject and Predicate Match Up!, Creative Educational Aids. 67-0521-01.
This build a sentence, subject and predicate match up game is suitable for 1-4 players aged 7 and over. Learning objectives that can be developed include: building simple sentences; identifying subject and predicate; using correct pronunciation.
See also: 67-0521-02—Build a Sentence Part 2: Parts of Speech Match Up!

Developing Early Literacy Assessment and Teaching, Hill, S, 2006. 36-0249-01.
This handbook for understanding and teaching early literacy focuses on the development of reading, writing, speaking and listening for learners from birth to eight years.

This text, designed to assist teachers and other professionals supporting children with visual impairment and additional disabilities, examines the role of touch in teaching and learning. It also has relevance to other professionals working with learners with severe and complex needs who wish to understand more about the role of touch in developing effective learning experiences.

This handbook, drawn from case studies, personal accounts and correspondence, provides a wide range of information related to Asperger’s syndrome; theory of mind; the perception of emotions in self and others; bullying and mental health issues; the effect of AS on language and cognitive abilities, sensory sensitivity.

The over 150 social stories in this book take learners, aged from two to six, step-by-step through basic activities such as brushing teeth, taking a bath and getting used to new clothes.