This edition explores the broad range of strategies and programs educators utilise to create and provide a safe and supportive learning environment that allow all students to be successful. The broader issue of a whole school approach which articulates a clear vision and direction that is inclusive of all students is also addressed.

This whole school vision is the central theme to the first article from John Hartley School B-7 which in recent weeks finally moved to a brand new site. The article describes this transition and how learning technologies is a focus of the new learning culture being established.

The start of a new school year can be daunting, with many students anxious about what new expectations are required of them. The second article from Highbury PS outlines how key transition points are managed for students with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. It is very much in keeping with the transition tips provided by Sue Larky.

Successful learners are connected learners and the article from Mark Oliphant College describes how the school systematically puts in place structures that promote student ownership and engagement through Community Studies.

The next two articles focus on transition from preschool to school. The Flagstaff Oval Speech and Language Program describes how Transition Books are used to support children transition to different schools. The Down Syndrome Society provides information about key issues and strategies that support the transition of students with Down Syndrome.

The review of school programs for students with NEPs and brought about many positive learning outcomes is described in the article from The Pines Schools.

In the final two articles, Ingrid Alderton and Libby Brown provide an overview of four key considerations in setting up for the success of all learners. Key questions are provided to assist in determining the requirements for successful entry into school or a new classroom.

The next edition of SERUpdate will focus on ‘Learning Difficulties’. Please refer to the back cover for more details and consider if you or a colleague can contribute an article.

Jim Sprialis
A/Assistant Manager
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MANAGING TRANSITION AND CHANGE AT JOHN HARTLEY SCHOOL

Setting the Scene
John Hartley School B-7 opened in January 2010 at the old Davoren Park School site which was officially closed in 2009. The school community moved to its new site on Peachey Road in November this year. Traditional classroom structures with limited access to technology have been left behind to move in to a purpose built facility for 21st Century learning.

Today’s students are digital learners – they literally take in the world via the filter of desktop computers and, increasingly, mobile computing devices such as mobile phones, handheld gaming devices, PDAs, and laptops. To transition students to become truly global citizens at our B-7 site we are building on the skills that ‘Z’ generation learners bring with them from an early age. Early Years students at John Hartley School utilise multimedia devices such as iPads and access the internet with tools such as handheld video games like Leapster.

A successful transition to the new site occurred by building on students’ skills and knowledge to develop their ability to inquire and participate in the 21st century. The new John Hartley School is wired in such a way that students can access their files and the internet from anywhere in the school. For JHS the notion of teaching within four walls of learning spaces no longer occurs. We are designing learning space environments that are flexible and adaptive to cater for different learning and teaching styles and a diversity of learning activities.

In flexible learning spaces, furniture that can be moved easily and manipulated, caters for different group sizes, collaboration and independent work. Casual furniture like beanbags and ottomans are easily moved to support most learning situations. The furniture can convey a physical environment of openness which invites the creation of social spaces. It therefore plays a role in increasing engagement and reducing student tensions.

Supporting Staff Transition
Weekly staff meetings and fortnightly team meetings focused on current priorities of providing a smooth transition for all stakeholders to the new site and developing the site learning plan. At each stage of the planning process, scaffolded steps and respectful feedback facilitated staff engagement in purposeful discussion and collaboration to ensure a successful transition to the new site. For example the Learning Technologies Team is using a set protocol of norms to discuss, share and reflect upon our current ICT usage as a tool for learning.

This provides teachers with a platform to share and reflect on current practices. Discussions generated from these sessions guides our planning and future directions. These sessions also involve critical reflection of ‘What is inquiry based learning’ and what it means for educators in the 21st Century. Reflections on current practices allow for individual and group goals and opportunities for development of new skills and strategies.

The shift for staff into a whole school inquiry based learning approach using Learning Technologies requires careful planning and collaboration. Conferences and professional learning opportunities have exposed staff to new pedagogy, including structured critique such as:

- visiting St Albans Meadows in Melbourne with teachers in the laptop program to view 1:1 learning and inquiry based curriculum
- whole staff training utilising iPhoto, iMovie and Photo Booth, flip cameras for movie making
- new staff have been issued with an Apple Mac laptop and received training in its operations, programs and features as required.

Learning for the 21st century is flexible, creative, challenging and complex. It addresses a rapidly changing world filled with new problems as well as exciting new possibilities. Computers are everyday tools and their value in education is for creativity and learning rather than as machines to “deliver” the curriculum. We live in an increasingly diverse, globalised and complex society. Educators are shifting to an inquiry-based curriculum aimed at engaging students in authentic questions that address real-world problems. These require students to be able to communicate, function and create change personally, socially, economically and politically on local, national and global levels.

For JHS and its community, it is a new way of understanding the concept of “knowledge”, and a new way of designing and delivering the curriculum from B-7. This challenge has required staff to be involved, informed and comfortable with the processes used. This was facilitated through staff meetings, team meetings, site visits, training and development in 21st Century Learning, establishing an Inquiry Learning Team and introducing laptops in the 1:1 program. Moving from traditional classrooms with limited ICT to sub-schools with flexible learning spaces and facilities has been dynamic and revolutionary for our learning community.
Staff began the shift to using the tools of Learning Technologies to support student learning prior to moving to the new site. Greater use of Learning Technologies supported teachers to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills of new pedagogy. This is a focus of teaching and learning at the new site.

Supporting Student Transition
Preparation for the new site was a well-planned process. Students were involved in the naming process of the school, discussions about what they would like at the new site, site visits, and class activities such as film making, art, math and science. The daily electronic student bulletin was a valuable tool in providing photos and information about the new site.

The new site is designed with sub schools with various sized learning spaces. To prepare transition for students in working in sub schools with different teachers, students moved from space to space with different teachers to support their learning in Maths groups, comprehension focus groups and Literacy groups R-7. Students are self-directed, and work independently and interdependently.

Learning Technologies is used to support students with their individual learning needs. Software such as Clicker 5, Reading Doctor and whole-school based programs like Jolly Phonics provide scaffolding and support for students to build on and demonstrate their knowledge and understandings. Learning is student centered, with the teacher as a facilitator of learning and students’ interests drive the curriculum.

This caters for students’ different rates and styles of learning and provides opportunities for students with disabilities and additional learning needs to more fully participate in their learning and reach their full potential. Learning Technologies are utilised to support this.

This transition into Inquiry Based Learning began in the Children’s Centre where children were being introduced to a constructivist approach with multiple entry and exit points for tasks. This addressed different rates and styles of learning as well as catering for student interests. Across the site we use explicit teaching to support students’ learning with continued reinforcement and opportunities to practise skills. We use methodologies such as collaborative learning and different groupings; one to one, ability groups, mixed ability groups, cross age groups and peer support. This caters for students’ individual needs and allows for instructional time where specific skills and knowledge are taught as needed. This approach provides learning opportunities for all students to succeed. By using scaffolding, explicit teaching, modeling and constant reinforcement of skills, students become confident and successful learners.

Moving into the new site has given the opportunity to develop new school expectations for various facilities. Of particular importance is the development of learning area expectations, which is vital for meaningful teaching and learning. This required student input through class meetings, induction and orientation around the school to familiarise students with the new learning areas and facilities. School expectations are revisited each day to support students who are finding the move unsettling. Regular assemblies were held to inform and discuss issues or concerns for students around the transition to the new school. Initial staff meetings were used to clarify, modify and put processes in place to ensure a consistent approach to teaching and learning across the site B-7.
Supporting parents and the community.

The school is a central focus for the community and it has been critical to keep the community involved and informed of the changes occurring over the last 2 years. This occurred through newsletters, parent information sessions, informal conversations, phone calls, displays of school plans, photographs and governing council visits to the site. Last year parent surveys on naming the new school as well as planning and implementing the closure of Davoren Park School occurred. The closing ceremony respected the role the school had played for the community whilst engaging the community in moving forward to 21st Century learning facilities and opportunities. The positive and proactive promotion of the facilities and learning opportunities was a significant factor in assisting the community to move forward and embrace the new John Hartley B-7 School.

An orientation for parents and community members was conducted in the first week of the move to the new site and included information about community of the new expectations and how the site would operate. Governing council, newsletters, posters and the school website played a vital role in representing and informing our community about the new site. Workshops have been planned to help parents/caregivers develop an understanding of learning in the 21st Century and the role that Learning Technologies will play in helping their children reach their full potential.

With the move into a state of the art facility, the staff and students at John Hartley School are in a unique and privileged position. The highly collaborative and reflective processes currently used at John Hartley will ensure that effective teaching and learning occurs within a 21st Century setting.

Lynley Allan
Assistant Principal – Early Years
Kate James
Assistant Principal - Learning Technologies

SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION FOR STUDENTS ON THE SPECTRUM

When first approached to make a contribution to this edition of SERUpdate, I intended to gather information from the staff at Highbury Primary School as to the components they considered essential for successful transition. Soon after beginning this process, it became clear that I should in fact be extending my inquiry to take into account the thoughts and opinions of our students and their families.

A parent of a year one student kindly offered her perspective...

Starting a new school year can be daunting for many children but for a child on the autism spectrum it presents lots of different challenges that need to be overcome. A new classroom, teacher, routines, classroom layout, sensory issues such as smells and noises are but a few things that can cause concern for the child, parents and school staff.

Last year, to ease some of these concerns, my son and a friend were asked to go to a classroom to do small jobs as part of the end of year clean up on several occasions and at various times of the day. This was in fact part of a transition process for him to become familiar with what would be his new class and teacher.

With no pressure, he was able to observe the class, hear the teacher’s voice when speaking to them as well as to the class, learn where different things in the class were kept, where the class itself was located in the building, where bags were kept, what things were on the desks and where drink bottles were kept.

This became a very positive experience for my son who started to recognize the teacher whilst on yard duty and would approach her to say hello. When he learned at the end of the year that he would be in that class with that teacher, to hear him say, “I know where that class is and I know the teacher,” were words that could ease a parent’s mind.

While this process may overall take time to plan and organise, the rewards are exceptional for everyone involved.

Bettina Pfeil
Successful Transition for Students on the Spectrum

This process required a collaborative effort between teachers, SSOs, leadership personnel and often personnel from DECS Support Service Providers and agencies such as Autism SA. Children are supported by a familiar staff member and a peer on their visits to the room of their new teacher. During 1:1 support sessions, children are helped to reflect on and discuss where they are going, how they get there from other parts of the school, who they will see there and the name of the teacher. As the child becomes more familiar and at ease in the new classroom, the support staff member tells them (and their friend) that he or she will be leaving them with the new teacher for a short while and will soon return to take them back to their current class. For children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), it may be necessary to specify the time that the support person will return or use a timer to indicate when this will happen and the length of time it might take.

Another strategy we have found extremely effective was first suggested by Autism SA. Making use of The Transition Booklet, which is available in several different modifiable templates has been beneficial in supporting a smooth transition from one physical setting to another. The booklet contains photographs with appropriate labels showing for example the new classroom, teacher, play areas, the correct doors to use. These templates can be made into personalised booklets. The child can take the booklet home over the holiday break to look at and discuss over and over with family and friends. This creates familiarity, increases confidence and therefore helps to reduce anxiety.

Students at our school who are registered with Autism SA have often accessed support at various points of transition. The Year 7/8 transition programs have been particularly successful. Following a Request for Service Application by our school, an Autism SA support worker is allocated to work with a student on a weekly basis for approximately four to six weeks. We negotiate a suitable time slot with the support worker who meets with the student and also communicates with school personnel and the student’s family about the program. Early sessions are conducted at our school and help the students to explore many changes and differences between primary and secondary school cultures. Contact is made with the student’s new high school to obtain examples of year 8 diaries, timetables, newsletters, daily bulletins and the like. A transition booklet summarising the student’s questions and answers can also be compiled.

During the latter weeks of the program, visits are scheduled to the high school where the student and a friend can meet key support personnel, be guided around the school without the pressure of getting lost and ask questions. Additional visits, together with a Negotiated Education Plan meeting at the high school and a standard orientation day all contribute significantly to a successful transition for students with ASD.

When asked if he thought the transition program had been helpful for him, one of our students gave the following response...

Visiting the high school was good because I got to be there without all the other kids. I know where to go on the first day and I know where I can go at recess and lunch times if I just want a quiet place to be. The best thing about the visits was that I now know that the canteen has the kind of chocolate milk I drink and I can buy some every day.

The strategies I have described operate in conjunction with regular transition programs at Highbury Primary School and are by no means limited to children diagnosed with ASD. The learning and wellbeing of all students is greatly benefited by feeling that they are prepared, confident and supported through the many changes they must face. The time and energy taken to implement additional transition programs is far outweighed by the success for students, their families and schools.

Deb Pryor
Assistant Principal – Special Needs/SHIP
Highbury Primary School

All teachers create physical, social and emotional conditions for the learners in their classrooms. Teachers who consciously foster supportive yet challenging conditions provide students with increased opportunities for high quality learning. Establishing democratic relationships is a critical condition to sharing power and developing a safe, low-threat environment for learning.

SA TIEL Framework Guide
Community Studies as a SACE subject is a brilliant subject for the rewards it can potentially bring for both the teacher and the student. For it to be a successful undertaking for all involved, three levels of ownership and planning need to occur. Firstly it needs to be owned by the school administration, secondly the teaching staff need to be on board with all that this subject requires and thirdly the student undertaking the study needs to be in control of what they are doing. Often this is a difficult undertaking as Community Studies can often be seen as a subject for students who have not met requirements or who would otherwise struggle with mainstream subjects. So how does this happen?

1. The Whole School Perspective

The Personal Learning Plan (PLP), an integral component of the SACE, needs to incorporate more than just the 10 compulsory units of Year 10. It should identify a student’s desired pathway through the whole of their senior schooling. The PLP is a vehicle for students to identify areas of interest and skill, often the starting point and most difficult decision for a Community Studies project. If these factors are already identified within a student’s PLP then this can be a key reference point and provide purpose and meaning to their project.

This clearly connects to timetabling conversations. The importance that a subject receives in the timetabling process can often translate to the importance it will hold in the classroom. As with any subject, Community Studies will often work best when planned for, when it is identified through the course counselling process as a meaningful option and when it has a dedicated teaching line attached to it. As such, the subject has a real pathway associated with it and is described in a course counselling booklet. This helps to limit the idea that the subject is used to ‘save’ students when they are failing – a last resort kind of measure. At the same time however, the very nature of the subject requires a measure of flexibility. Students need to be able to access resources, both within the school and the community when they are available to them, not when a scheduled lesson dictates.

If Community Studies is valued as an option and pathway both by a student’s PLP and the schools timetable then it follows that a level of credibility will be attached to the subject. The level to which a school values a subject will have a flow on effect to the level at which students will often succeed within a subject. This credibility can be further reinforced by the budget which is attached to Community Studies. When resources, whether human, physical or financial are attached to a subject, the expected outcomes are also increased.

All of these factors add to the status that a subject holds not only within the school’s teaching and student communities but also within the parent and wider community.

2. The Teaching Staff

The teacher responsible for Community Studies has perhaps the most significant role in ensuring student success in this subject. Teacher knowledge, expertise and ownership of a subject will be a determining factor in student engagement and success. This should translate into a clear understanding of the subject requirements and performance standards, along with an understanding of the subject's importance to a student's potential completion of SACE. In order to do this the teacher must ‘own’ the contract with the student.

How does this happen? The key to this is the relationship that exists between the teacher and the student. There must be clear communication and frequent conversations, regular meetings and clear expectations that support the student and ultimately ensures success. It is important to acknowledge that not every teacher is suited to this style of teaching because it involves relinquishing control over the subject content, often a comfortable buffer zone. It is a particular ‘headset’ that requires the ability to be a coach or mentor as opposed to the expert subject teacher. However, there is still an amount of explicit teaching that needs to occur. Community Studies is ultimately about a negotiated contract of work based on student interest, skill and growth of knowledge. New learning must still occur. The teacher’s role still involves providing scaffolding, highlighting the need for drafting, emphasising the importance of due dates, teaching and monitoring research skills. Students require teacher support and explicit teaching of these skills. There is also a need for ongoing reflection, modification and negotiation.

Community Studies teachers need to be able to problem solve, access and establish networks and creatively generate resources. These are very particular skills that teachers require to be able to explicitly teach in this subject.
3. The Student
The student is the driver and primary ‘owner’ of any Community Studies contract. They require high level of commitment and motivation to succeed. One of the most important factors is that the contract is achievable, has realistic outcomes and a clear purpose. How does a student work this out? This is partially the role of the teacher, but also the flow on effect of support the student has had in establishing realistic pathways, through an effective PLP process. Students are capable of planning and goal setting, but first need to be provided with the tools to develop those skills. The PLP is a very useful vehicle for this to occur.

In any subject it is clear that a student’s ability is the first factor in success. There is no point in undertaking Stage 2 Music if you have never played an instrument nor have any musical ability. Likewise there is no point in negotiating a contract if the student has no skill or interest in the area of study. The difficulty in getting students to identify topics is substantial, however it is also a powerful learning tool in this subject. This is challenging, but achievable. Students will generally achieve when they are interested, encouraged, challenged, supported to take risks and see purpose in what they are doing.

As initially stated, Community Studies can be a brilliant subject to teach. The potential for the teacher and the student to learn is only limited by the imagination and commitment of those involved in establishing the contract.

Kathleen Hoare
Head of Senior Years
Mark Oliphant College

### The Three Keys To Success

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TRANSPORTION BOOKS

Children attending the Preschool Speech and Language Program (SLP) often transition to different schools than their kindy peers. To assist with their transition, a social story book about their move to school, using simple language they can understand, is routinely developed. It includes photos taken at different sites. They are often similar in nature but the message given is personalised for that child, depending on their needs and level of understanding.

The SLP program teacher accompanies the child on their first transition visit and takes photos. The emphasis is on photos at times of transition (snack, lunch, play times), for daily routines, familiar staff, buildings and equipment. Behavioural expectations are also photographed where possible or needed eg. where to keep your bag, how to sit and listen in group times, play area boundaries.

The language used in the book is at the child’s level of understanding and is always worded positively ie. the book tells the child what they can do rather than what they can’t. (eg. “this is the teacher’s computer, John can play on the children’s computer” rather than “Don’t touch the teacher’s computer”). The book is much more powerful in conveying its message if the story is personalised, using photos of the child and the child’s name, rather than using a generic book without photos of people the child knows.

Individual issues/needs can also be addressed within the social story eg. what to do when upset, where to wait for mum at the end of the day (so that the child doesn’t attempt to walk home alone). After developing a number of transition books, the time taken to develop an individual child’s book is reduced. Staff become quicker at knowing what photos need to be taken and how to word the language in the book. The books are relatively quick and easy to develop, yet very powerful in helping a child have a smooth transition to school.

The book is printed in colour and presented in a display folder. In this way, it can be added to as the child needs to learn new staff members or new rules and routines. The book is sent home with the expectation that it is read frequently with family members in the lead up to starting school. For those children beginning school in Term 1, parents are encouraged to read the book after Christmas and during the holiday period.

Kerryn Kinnersly - Director,
Sally Mainsbridge - Speech Pathologist,
Flagstaff Oval Speech and Language Program.

Visual supports help teachers accomplish their goal with much less effort.

Linda Hodgdon
The goal of effective transition is to increase the ability of the student to access the curriculum and participate as part of the school community. No two transition programs will be exactly alike.

**Transition for a student with Down syndrome occurs:**
- at any time there is a change of teacher eg new year, change of teacher during the year
- junior primary to primary (especially playground, toilets etc. may change)
- at any time there is a change of assistant (SSO)

**Major points of transition are:**
- preschool to school
- primary school to middle school/secondary school
- middle school to senior school
- exiting school
- moving to a new school
- school relocation.

**Characteristics of students with Down Syndrome**

Many students with Down syndrome may exhibit the following characteristics which will impact on the success of any transition event:
- resistance to change
- failure avoidance (avoiding tasks where THEY feel they will not be successful)
- inefficient memory skills – short term working memory
- lengthy processing time
- learned helplessness / ‘velcroed to adults’ ‘poor me’, I can’t, I have Down syndrome
- reliant on extrinsic motivation (wait to be prompted)
- short attending time
- reduced stamina
- communication difficulties & delay
- hearing impairment
- visual impairment
- range of intellectual impairment across all areas of learning
- fine/ gross motor delays
- sensory issues
- social/ emotional delay
- mental health issues e.g. anxiety, obsessing.

**PRESCHOOL TO SCHOOL**

1. Choose sector and setting at least one year prior to school start. Discuss at the NEP meeting.
2. Age to begin school – Down Syndrome Society recommends that students begin school at approximately 5 ½ years of age with a gradual entry.
3. A health check is essential prior to school entry: hearing (audiogram), vision, blood test (iron, zinc, thyroid, selenium).
4. Check that student can access the environment eg. size of toilet, access to classroom.
5. Gradual entry into school needs to reflect the needs of the student eg. attendance to recess time, to lunch eating time only, one day off mid-week.
6. If possible identify the teacher and SSO that will be supporting the student.
7. The teacher and/or SSO and/or special education staff need to visit the preschool a number of times prior to school beginning to observe the child and share strategies.
8. Visit the school multiple times with a preschool staff member in the term prior to starting school – to familiarise the student with the school environment, layout of the classroom. They need to participate in classroom activities/lessons.
9. Make a social story book about school. Add a page, with photographs after each visit. The book should be sent home to be shared for the holidays.
10. Boundary training.
12. Teach students how to access play equipment.
14. Teach eating/ drinking skills and routines.
15. Teach the morning routine.
16. Learn the layout of the school both getting there and coming back eg. classroom to library to classroom, getting to the play equipment and back to the classroom.
17. Returning to the class/ identifying the sound (siren) that means return to class.
18. Key staff will need training within the first term of the student attending school.
19. Establish areas of need of both the student and teacher and match these needs to the support time (eg. teacher requires support during a reading session but not PE). Identify personnel to provide this support. Identify a back-up plan when there are staff absences.
20. Support time needs to be flexible to reflect the current needs of the student.
TRANSACTION FOR STUDENTS WITH DOWN SYNDROME

ISSUES OF TRANSITION

At any point of transition, the student with Down Syndrome may experience difficulty with some or all of the following areas:

- **Communication**
  - Understanding the staff – each staff member will have an individual way of communicating with the child eg. vocabulary, tone, length of instructions.
  - Processing complex language / instructions.
  - Staff familiar with the alternative communication needs of the student eg. iPad, iPod, PECS, signing.

- **Class dynamics**
  - New students and staff with names to learn.
  - Class structure changes eg. number of students, open classroom.
  - Interactions between groups/individuals changes eg. the amount of attention.

- **Learning routines**
  As each teacher’s classroom management style is unique this will be reflected in changes to:
  - rules
  - routines
  - expectations eg. behavioural, type and length of task becomes more complex.

The student may be resistant to change/learning these new routines. behaviours such as refusal to co-operate, crawling under the table, dropping may reflect this.

- **Changes**
  - Layout of the classroom.
  - Location of classroom.
  - Yard
    - designated play area
    - yard games become more complex
    - increasingly students chat in social groups ( rather than play).

- **Regression of skills** occurs over lengthy breaks

- **Independence**
  A ‘honeymoon period’ of a few weeks is common. Be prepared!!

**Strategies**

Adequate preparation is essential to prevent/reduce inappropriate behavioural responses to the new environment. The use of visuals is essential to support the student becoming secure in the new environment.

- **Communication**
  - The communication tools need to be shared with new staff/ students.
  - Use supportive peers from the previous class (to translate for the teacher).
  - Reduced language of instruction.
  - Allow greater response time ie. WAIT.
  - Teach routines / set up contracts to reduce teacher talk.

- **Class dynamics**
  - Class social story book with photos of students/ staff – begin the previous year and gradually add new faces.
  - Use a buddy system to develop mutual understanding between peers and the student.
  - The student will benefit from sitting at the same desk while other students move desks as required.

- **Learning Routines**
  - Initially use SSO time to set up and teach routines.
  - Use peers where possible to teach new routines.
  - Use visual timetables, daily and subject.
  - Use visual timetables to highlight changes e.g. teacher absent, sports day.
  - Display rules/ routines using visuals eg. toilet procedures, how to ask for help.

- **Rules / Expectations**
  - Clearly define the class rules. Focus on positive expectations eg. ‘no running’ becomes ‘walk inside’, ‘don’t go in puddles’ becomes ‘walk around the puddles’.
  - Make and display visuals of the rules. Repeat often until known. Revisit frequently.
  - Role play the rules in specific situations eg. don’t push in, ask “Can I play ?”
  - Insist and persist with rules/expectations in the first weeks.
  - A routine once learnt will be followed absolutely.

Ensure that the equipment & modified curriculum are passed on to the new setting.

Is the student clearly & quickly visible in the yard?

Remember
All students want to and can be, successful. We as teachers must provide them with the best opportunities to get there. I believe that through the new learning, teachers better understand how children best learn and they see how explicit, targeted intervention impacts on learning outcomes. At our site, recent evidence clearly demonstrates this. To quote Thomas Jefferson, "There is nothing more unequal than the equal treatment of unequal people." Also, we know if we keep doing more of the same, we will get more of the same.

I began my new role at The Pines in 2008. Structures and processes designed to improve student learning outcomes implemented by competent teachers and SSOs were already in place. Teachers were programming and teaching for Literacy Improvement and students with learning needs in both the Junior Primary and Primary sectors were accessing two specialised reading programs supervised by SSOs.

As my first year wore on, I became concerned that there did not seem to be a whole school approach to the teaching of literacy and students identified with learning difficulties were participating in the same program even though individual Negotiated Education Plans had been written for them. A further concern was that learning for students with specific needs was placed in the hands of SSOs rather than trained teachers. Data showed that only a small percentage of students with NEPs participating in a fairly heavily resourced program had improved over time. A large percentage of students showed no improvement.

I presented the data to staff who agreed that the practice at the time was making little or no difference to the majority of students – approximately 40 with NEPs. It was time for a new approach!

I had an extremely hard working, dedicated Year 3/4 teacher on staff. She was bright, outgoing and used a constructivist approach that challenged and engaged all of her students. She was warm and caring and cultivated amazing relationships with all of her students and parents. This extended to other families in the school. With some encouragement, she agreed to take on the role of Special Education Teacher in 2009. I also appointed a full time SSO to support this arrangement.

Much of the time during that first term in 2009 was used to establish a classroom equipped with resources and materials dedicated to supporting students with learning difficulties. Alex and Jodie, the Special Education Teacher and SSO visited other sites and attended extensive training and development.

**Education Consultants**
Down Syndrome Society of SA Inc (2010)
Contact Jill Phillips
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They worked closely with our disabilities coordinator. They networked with a range of service providers ranging from Autism SA to the Down Syndrome Society to providers at the local level such as occupational therapists and behaviour management coordinators. They were indeed learners themselves, soaking up all the new learning they could access. Much of that first term was extremely busy with any spare time devoted to developing the new “Special Ed. Room.”

Over the two years since Alex and Jodie began managing the Special Education programs at our school, we have seen huge improvements in the learning outcomes and dispositions of our students. Alex responds to staff and student issues and challenges quickly and effectively and provides leadership in the provision of support and resources.

Alex’s role includes:

- working collaboratively with staff and other support services to document a Negotiated Education Plan which includes curriculum outcomes, goals/priorities, accommodations and teaching and assessment strategies
- initiating and running NEP review meetings to ensure parent and student voice
- ensuring Health Support Plans are in place and current
- supporting students at risk by implementing pre-referral and referral processes
- liaising with schools to share and review information to implement transition programs
- liaising with DECS personnel eg. Disabilities Coordinators, Guidance Officers, Speech Pathologists and outside agencies eg. Disabilities SA, Down Syndrome of SA, Autism SA, Women’s and Children’s Hospital, Novita, CAMHS
- applying for District Support Funding to resource programs for students who require extra intervention and support
- sharing sound teaching strategies and practices with classroom teachers
- developing and purchasing appropriate and relevant resources
- participating in Student Review Meetings
- providing release for teachers to talk to Guidance Officers, attend meetings etc
- identifying students for Special Options placement and preparing packages

- writing budget submissions and organising training and development for staff
- responding promptly to concerns and requests from parents/caregivers
- providing counselling and welfare support for students
- conducting Parent/Teacher interviews
- supporting students with excursions and camp
- organising diagnostic testing to identify students’ literacy levels
- monitoring and recording student progress
- attending meetings with parents and staff to review programs and address issues/concerns
- developing relationships with students that encourage positive attitudes to learning
- working with teachers to model explicit teaching strategies, mentor and demonstrate practice.

In her own words Alex comments: “As a Special Education Teacher I am passionate about meeting the educational needs of all students with learning difficulties, disabilities and health care needs by promoting inclusive and non discriminatory practices. I establish a positive and supportive environment for students, that fosters negotiation, participation and reflection in their learning. I strive for students to achieve their full potential by identifying students’ individual needs and planning relevant and engaging programs.

I encourage students to take risks and develop confidence to tackle tasks without the fear of failure, develop a sense of belonging and a desire to learn. I develop a sense of ownership in students by enabling them to make choices and be in control of their learning”

Differentiated Learning is an essential component of Alex’s program. Her teaching practices and strategies are adjusted to suit the needs of students by incorporating supports and accommodations. She caters for the individual learning needs of students and collaboratively planned relevant programs with their teachers in order for them to achieve to the best of their ability.
Setting up for Success at the Pines Schools - A Principal’s Reflection

She does this by:

- developing NEPs to ensure planning and instruction are adjusted to suit the needs of students
- identifying and accommodating students preferred learning styles
- using a variety of methodologies - explicit teaching of skills, modelling, hands on learning activities
- allowing students to negotiate the goals and expectations of the learning
- developing criteria for success with students
- using reinforcements such as reward contracts to engage students
- tapping into students’ interests and providing lots of repetition activities
- establishing peer/buddy support programs
- developing Intervention Support Plans for students with challenging behaviours
- providing visual aids eg. toileting plans, morning organisational plans, daily routines etc to increase independence

- implementing math and literacy programs using strategies recommended by the Down Syndrome Society of SA
- working with students 1:1 and in small groups and enabling students to work collaboratively to support each other
- implementing individualised spelling programs – letter sound concepts, phonological awareness, sight word vocabulary tasks

- setting up retreats and safe places for students to calm down
- developing reading programs that focus on decoding, comprehension and developing fluency using audio – visual resources

- implementing speech programs in consultation with DECS Speech Pathologists
- explicitly teaching social interaction through the use of social stories, role plays, 5 Ls, noise meter etc
- ensuring students have access to specialised equipment from SERU if required
- supporting students during literacy blocks within the classroom
- ensuring Soundfield systems are utilised in classes for students with hearing impairment
- tapping into students’ interests, providing visual aids and repetition activities and breaking tasks down.

Summary
Data shows that there have been many positive outcomes for students as a result of this initiative:

- a noticeable increase in learner engagement
- increased teacher knowledge and skills and understanding of students with learning difficulties and disabilities
- well informed parents through Student Review Meetings
- students are encouraged to tackle new learning with tasks designed to provide multiple entry points
- a range of Intervention Programs in place - Intellectually Disabled, Literacy, Aspergers, Autistic
- a huge range of resources for teachers to access
- fewer behaviour management incidents.

Erica Solowji
Principal
The Pines Schools
Setting up for success for all learners involves schools and teachers considering the following four approaches:

- whole-school planning in all areas – curriculum, behavioural expectations and environment. Waves or tiers of intervention are evident and documented.
- assisted learning with high expectations for all
- support approaches
- individualised approaches.

Questions the school community and individual teachers need to ask when exploring what it is that an individual or group of students, particularly students with a disability need for successful entry into school or a new classroom relate to the context, the assessment, the curriculum and the students themselves.

**The Context or Engineering the Classroom Environment**

A welcoming environment where all students feel they are members of the class promotes a positive attitude to engagement and learning. Teachers who talk to their students about high expectations for all and students knowing that they also need to have expectations of themselves, supports achievement and wellbeing.

Questions teachers will need to ask themselves.

- What are the teaching and learning provisions that I have in the class for all students. What does this mean for the student who has a disability or complex needs?
- What is the age or stage of development of the student in relation to others in the class/group?
- Is what is to be offered respectful of the student in relation to his/her peers?
- What type of provision or support might be required eg class support, one to one or withdrawal?
- How dependant or independent is the student? This would be a consideration when planning to set up the dependence/independence model.
- What strategies might be used to support the student in their learning eg. peer/cross age support, SSO.
- Are flexible groupings used in the classroom? That is, different groups for different purposes with students having an understanding why there is a need for flexible grouping?
- Does the student need to be explicitly taught/shown how to fulfill different roles within a group eg. the recorder, spokesperson, timekeeper and observer?
- What might be the elements in the physical setting that need to be considered for access, participation and successful learning? Elements that would be considered could include seating arrangements (individual, partner, group), class movement zones/factors that distract from learning?
- Are there visual supports such as cue cards, charts, timetables/schedules?
- Are resources such as math or sensory equipment available and easily accessible by all in the classroom without the need to highlight the student who may require the equipment?
- What might be the technology that could support the student eg. pencil grips, sloping desks, laptop, text to speech software and interactive whiteboards?
- Are the above strategies in place when the student goes to another teacher for specialist studies or transitions to a new class?

**Assessment/Knowing the Student Profile**

Each year, teachers begin the school year with a focus on getting to know their students. This process assists in developing a learning profile of each of their students and supports teachers with the curriculum mapping process. Getting to know students with complex needs quickly is of particular importance as it will determine the way the curriculum is offered and differentiated.

When profiling a student with disabilities or complex needs teachers may:

- gather information from students’ records checking to see if there are any reports from professionals such as psychologists, speech pathologists and medical personnel (remember privacy principles in relation to storage and access of information by relevant personnel)
- check whether the student has an Individual Learning Plan or Negotiated Education Plan and when it was last reviewed
- review any systemic or school assessments such as NAPLAN results, School Entry Assessment, running records and school diagnostic, criterion referenced and teacher developed assessments and teacher observations. If it is felt that there is insufficient information to support programming and planning consider what other assessment might be needed (the DECS Screening and Assessment Guide may be a useful reference)
Setting Up For Success for All Learners

• identify the student's strengths, passions and interests and how s/he learns best. This information can be gained from the student themselves, the family, previous teachers or student records
• look at all aspects of assessment eg. strengths, self concept, interest, motivation, learning preferences.

The Curriculum

• It needs to be recognised that the student with a disability is a member of the class and as such needs to be considered in the planning and programming for the whole class.
• Differentiation of curriculum supports all learners through personalising learning with clear goals and expectations for all. Differentiated models such as the “All, Most, Some” model by Schumm, Vaughn & Leavell support teachers to program in a differentiated way.
• Should the student not be able to participate successfully in the whole program areas of difficulty or concern need to be identified and goals set (preferably in partnership with families, other teachers and as much as possible with the student) that support the achievement of outcomes or standards?
• Teachers need to consider what teaching programs and strategies have been used and how successful they have been and why they were successful or unsuccessful.
• Should the student be unable to successfully participate in programs, consideration about whether the student can participate with scaffolding, special provisions such as additional time, modifications or whether there needs to be an alternate program.
• The types of strategies, scaffolds and special provisions that best support the student need to be identified eg. explicit teaching, using a multi-sensory approach, working collaboratively with a buddy or using a range of technologies. Are there others who need to be involved with the student such as an SSO, occupational therapist, parent volunteers and cross-age tutors
• Should it be decided that the student would benefit from the use of assistive technology the following questions could be considered:
  o Would the student use technology to access the same curriculum as their peers, use technology to access a modified curriculum, or use technology to access an alternate curriculum?
  o Can the technology be used and benefit all the students in the class?
  o Is their technology toolkit a combination of low tech and high tech solutions?
  o Are these portable solutions, which can be accessed in a range of contexts used by other students?

The Learner

Students are aware of the perception others hold of their ability to achieve. The expectation that all will achieve whether it be against standards or personal goals does affect a young person's actions/performance.

The 2007-2008 My Voice study of more than 140,000 students conducted in the United States highlights the strong correlation between students who believe setting and achieving high goals is important and a school experience where self worth, active engagement and having a sense of purpose is promoted. The study also indicated that of the 91% of students who agreed with the statement “I believe I can be successful” only 70% felt that their teachers believed that they could succeed.

Questions teachers may need to ask themselves.

• What are the individual factors that can help the learner make appropriate gains from the program?
• What does the student want to learn? What might their goals be?
• How can I support the student in setting and achieving their high goals?
• Consider strengths, weaknesses, the conditions the learner is most likely to learn under, preferred modes of learning, preferred approaches to help maintain interest and motivation as well as enhancing self-esteem.
• What might be the self management/ meta-cognitive strategies the student needs to develop to become a successful and independent learner?

One of the aims of teachers should be about supporting students to see the connection between the achievement of their goals and future pathways.

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Jim Spirialis
A/Assistant Manager, SERU
Setting up for success involves a commitment to a whole-school approach. What might you see when there is a whole school approach?

- A whole-school plan for all with a clear vision that is culturally inclusive.
- Waves or tiers of intervention explicitly stated/documentated.
- Strong leadership team including the principal.
- A culture of high expectation for all and rigorous monitoring and evaluation.
- Dedication to capacity building of all school personnel.
- Common understandings and language through professional conversations.
- Teachers who know the curriculum and the Learning Areas continua.
- Evidence and data informing teaching and learning programs.
- Joint planning with class teachers, specialist teachers and SSOs.
- A focus on intervention and support that enables improvement.
- A focus on student support and development.
- Common reporting processes.
- Parent and community participation.

The differentiated classroom environment

- Utilise a range of assessment strategies. Multiple ways to pre-assess and assess student understanding.
- Embed assessment in activities.
- Have clearly defined goals for all students in the class.
- Students understanding what their goals are, both short and long term.
- Assess according to the students learning goals.
- Develop differentiated tasks based on assessment data.
- Utilise explicit and effective teaching strategies.

- Use assessment data to determine effective instructional groupings in order to improve student achievement.
- Students knowing what they are doing and are actively involved in their learning.
- Provide tiered activities to allow students to work on the same concepts but with varying degrees of complexity.
- Utilise flexible grouping in which learners are sometimes grouped by readiness levels, sometimes by interest, and sometimes by learning profiles.
- Structure problem-based learning to have students actively solve problems, either individually or in small groups.
- Provide resources that can be used by all students without singling out the student with difficulties.
- Modify materials or approaches in response to the evaluation of progress.
- Explicitly teach strategies such as mind mapping, organisational skills, revision techniques, self talk and study skills.
- Chunk or break tasks or activities into smaller, more manageable parts and providing more structured directions for each part.
- Incorporate specific activities, materials and ideas to enable all students to become more independent and proficient.
- Design instructional activities to increase students’ learning time and productivity.
- Support students be develop skills as buddies/peer tutors.
- Use buddy/peer tutoring.
- Encouraging students to use different tools to perform the same task eg. paper/pencil, manipulatives or computer.

Libby Brown
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Learning Difficulties Support Team
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Shared understanding of expected classroom and learning behavior allows teachers to build responsibility and to foster student autonomy through negotiating both learning and the direction of the curriculum. Rigorous learning is promoted when students are responsible for their own learning and engage with higher order thinking and intellectually challenging tasks.
Tips for Preparing the Classroom for Students with an ASD

1. Find out about ASD.
2. Find out about the individual student
   - fill in an Individual Student Profile (see “Making it a Success”)
   - fill in Summary Profile.
3. School Infrastructure
   - classroom support for teacher (training, etc)
   - assistance to set up structured environment
   - curriculum planning (IEPs, etc)
   - whole school staff
   - professional development for teacher and assistant.
4. Prepare the other students
   - this is very dependent on the other students.
   - The focus should be very positive and focus on similarities and differences between all of us. It may be helpful to discuss how individual student with ASD presents and ways the other students can help (in the same way they help other students).
5. IEPs
   - open and honest communication
   - setting ground rules
   - identify strengths and weaknesses
   - set realistic short and long term goals
   - work as a team
   - set support in place to ensure implementation
   - set feedback in place
   - develop expertise
   - adjust objectives
   - share frustrations
   - brainstorm, explore, create solutions
   - celebrate successes.

Positive Partnerships - A Report by Autism SA

Positive Partnerships workshops and information sessions for parents and carers with school-aged children diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are being held nationally over a four-year period (2008-2011). The workshops are run by the Australian Autism Education and Training Consortium (AAETC), of which Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) is the lead agency. The project is funded by the Australian Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and is a component of the Australian Government's Helping Children with Autism package.

In SA, thus far in 2010, seven workshops have been conducted in Whyalla, Adelaide, Tanunda, Renmark, Port Pirie and Clare for over 210 parents/carers. The 2 day workshops are interactive and focus on giving parents/carers knowledge and tools to work in partnership with schools so that together they can ensure their child receives maximum educational opportunities.

The workshops are facilitated by members of the SA Positive Partnerships delivery team, professionals who have extensive knowledge and experience working with children and young people with autism and their families.

David and Sue Bailey, parents who attended a Positive Partnerships workshop in Adelaide said: “We just wanted to express our very big thanks for a superb job done. The topic is very tricky, complex, emotional and varied. All the team members approached their roles with learning outcomes for parents at heart and with real professionalism interspersed with reality and fun, yes fun! A job really well done. AAETC national project manager Julie Hook said building strong and positive relationships with schools is a key element of the Positive Partnerships project. ‘Following the workshops we hear that strong partnerships have been formed between families and the schools - partnerships which have already started breaking barriers and reducing isolation,’ she said.

The workshops cater for all families regardless of the school setting or age of their children and highlight successful strategies for improving the learning outcomes for their children. Small group information sessions are held on day 2 which focuses on topics such as making friends, positive behaviour support, communication, siblings, sensory processing, completing work, sexuality, personal health and hygiene, bullying, and managing transitions.

Nationally, over 130 workshops and information sessions for almost 4,400 parents/carers have been conducted in metropolitan and regional locations, with a further 45 planned over the next 12 months. In addition, there is a complementary Positive Partnerships professional development program for school staff. 62 five-day equivalent professional development programs have been conducted nationally for almost 2,200 school staff. A further nine workshops will be held over the next 12 months.

In 2011 Parent/Carer workshops for South Australia will be held in Kangaroo Island, Adelaide, Victor Harbour and Murray Bridge. One Professional Development workshop is scheduled to be held in Adelaide during the months of March and April.

For further details and workshop dates, visit the Positive Partnerships website www.autismtraining.com.au, or call 1300 881 971.
In line with this term’s theme of setting up for success, SERU Spotlight showcases a recently acquired series of resources by well known author Peter Westwood.

The ‘What teachers need to know about…’ series is a collection of books that address pedagogy, disabilities, learning difficulties, spelling, numeracy, literacy and teacher wellbeing. All of these are fundamental areas that teachers need to consider when informing their practice in order to set up for success. Each text is written in an easy to read, guide like format.

How can they help?

• Refresh and expand basic teaching knowledge and classroom experience
• Address fundamentals of a subject with reference to other more comprehensive sources of information.
• Address key issues and trends based on current research
• Based on philosophy of ‘intervention for prevention’
• Promote student positivity and self esteem
• Offer practical strategies
• Compatible with Australian Curriculum
• Include additional resources and online links

They can be used by:

• practicing teachers who need a quick refresher plus some new ideas
• new graduates who need basic information
• teachers returning to the workforce.

Titles in the series include:

• Spelling
• Numeracy
• Teaching Methods
• Reading and Writing Difficulties
• Learning Difficulties
• Students with Disabilities
• Personal Wellbeing (teacher).

Peter Westwood is an internationally known educator, researcher, academic and author. With over 50 years experience in education, he has taught all age groups in schools, colleges and universities around the world. He has been an Associate Professor of Education and holds awards of excellence from Flinders University in South Australia and the University of Hong Kong. Peter has published many articles and books in the field of education and in particular on the subject of learning and learning difficulties. His research interests include learning difficulties, literacy, numeracy, effective teaching methods, teacher competencies and curriculum adaptation. Currently he is working as an educational consultant based in Hong Kong.
What Teachers Need To Know About Spelling

A selection of author’s summaries that lead into each chapter

Chapter 3 - Developmental and Strategic Aspects of Spelling

KEY ISSUES

- The acquisition of spelling ability follows a developmental sequence reflecting an individual’s increasing awareness of linguistic features.
- Spelling development also requires an individual to learn to apply increasingly effective strategies for learning new words and to check what is written.
- There is great variation among students in their discovery and use of spelling strategies.
- Teaching weaker spellers to apply more effective strategies for learning, checking and self-correcting words is a powerful way of addressing their instructional needs.

Chapter 4 - General Issues in Teaching Spelling

KEY ISSUES

- The teaching of spelling is a responsibility for all teachers, regardless of subject specialisation.
- All schools should have a written policy on spelling instruction that is understood and implemented by all teachers.
- Teachers need guidance on what to teach, in terms of priority vocabulary and word study strategies.
- Teachers also need guidance on time allocation and organisation options for teaching spelling.
- Assistive technology has an important role to play in fostering students’ writing and spelling ability.

Chapter 5 - Activities for Teaching and Learning

KEY ISSUES

- Spelling skills need to be taught alongside instruction in word recognition and phonetic decoding.
- Children benefit greatly from opportunities to study words and discover similarities, differences, rules and exceptions to rules. In particular, children need to move beyond single-letter phonetic decoding to reach the stage of recognising and applying larger orthographic units.
- Teaching should aim to provide each and every student with a repertoire of effective spelling and checking strategies.
- Time also needs to be devoted to mastering a core vocabulary of words frequently required in everyday writing.

Chapter 6 - Intervention for Spelling Difficulties

KEY ISSUES

- Many students find spelling a difficult cognitive skill to master.
- There are many possible reasons for difficulty in learning to spell, some of them inherent in the individual and some due to adverse outside influences.
- Intervention for spelling difficulties should take account of students’ current knowledge, skills and strategies and should build upon these.
- A learning disability (dysorthographia) can sometimes cause the difficulty with spelling; but it should not be regarded as a very common cause. Students with a learning disability can be helped by exactly the same remedial methods as other weak spellers.
This title focuses on current research to explain some of the causes of reading and writing difficulties and includes practical strategies to support students with difficulties. Additional resources and online links are also provided.

### Chapter 1 - Current Issues in Literacy Learning and Teaching

**KEY ISSUES**
- **Learning difficulties in literacy**: It is surprising – given what we know about effective methods for teaching reading and writing – that so many students slip through the net and do not achieve full literacy.
- **Causes**: There are many possible causes of difficulty in learning to read and write, some environmental and some intrinsic to the learner.
- **Methods**: The current perspective is that teaching methods should combine the motivational and contextual principles of the whole language approach with the proven benefits of explicit teaching of essential decoding skills and comprehension strategies.
- **Preventing literacy problems**: Prevention requires an understanding of the causes of such problems and knowledge of effective methods of instruction.
- **Teaching training**: Prevention of literacy problems requires well-trained teachers who can implement effective methods.

### Chapter 2 - Reading Difficulties at Word Level

**KEY ISSUES**
- **The simple view of reading**: Reading involves two main processes – identifying words and comprehending connected text.
- **How do readers identify words?** The answer to this question has implications for teaching.
- **Phonological and phonic skills**: Taken together, these skills provide the foundation for word identification. They need to be taught early, and by direct methods.
- **Sight vocabulary**: It is essential that students build a memory store of words they can recognise instantly without the need for decoding.

### Chapter 3 - Reading Difficulties at Text Level

**KEY ISSUES**
- **Comprehension**: Reading a text with full understanding draws on the reader’s background experience, general knowledge, vocabulary, syntactical awareness and word identification skills.
- **Comprehension difficulties**: Some difficulties are related directly to poor word recognition skills; but other factors can also create problems.
- **Online reading comprehension**: Online texts offer readers a new set of challenges – and a new set of opportunities.
- **Fluency and comprehension**: A reciprocal relationship exists between these two components of reading ability.

### Chapter 6 - Improving Writing and Spelling

**KEY ISSUES**
- **Learning to write**: Writing is a complex and demanding skill. If students are to become confident and competent writers, they require explicitly instruction and many opportunities to write.
- ** Strategies for writing**: Research evidence strongly supports the view that students benefit from instruction in specific strategies for writing. Struggling writers don’t necessarily lack ability or imagination they simply lack effective strategies for planning, composing and refining their text.
- **Spelling**: Spelling can be improved by effective instruction that combines direct teaching of spelling principles and appropriate strategies for learning new words.
RESOURCES RELATED TO THE TOPIC

Social Skills Teaching For Junior Classes, Van Der Kley, M. 1998. 37.0058.01
This is a program designed to teach positive social behaviours and skills to learners 5-8 years, including: following instructions/directions; conversations skills; turn taking; friendship skills; developing confidence and self esteem; self control over emotions and behaviours; putting in an effort; considering other points of views; cooperative skills; compromise and problem solving skills. The program has three key elements; identification of important social skills; teaching strategies; structured program that teaches one skill per week.

I Can Behave, Mannix, D. 1986. 66.0823.01
The I Can Behave Program consists of a teacher scripted storybook and a manual. The stories focus on specific classroom situations such as taking turns whilst the manual contains lesson plans at various levels of difficulty.

Social Skills and Anger Management, Van Der Kley, M. 1997. 66.1357.01
This 10 session course for 7-12 year olds focuses on practicing positive social skills to manage anger. It also provides follow up strategies to use in everyday living.

Friendly Kids Friendly Classrooms, McGrath, H. & Francey, S. 1991. 66.0566.01
This book is designed to assist in teaching social skills and confidence in the classroom. The authors have identified 21 skills, important for successful classroom and playground interactions and provides a variety of strategies, games and activities.

The Buzan Study Skills Handbook, Buzan, T. 2008. 66.1440.01
This book is designed to assist in teaching social skills and confidence in the classroom. The authors have identified 21 skills, important for successful classroom and playground interactions and provides a variety of strategies, games and activities.

This resources focuses on assisting students to learn the cognitive skills behind appropriate social behaviour rather than teaching a set of specific behaviours. It includes over 66 activity based lessons with photocopiable worksheets. Topics covered include understanding feelings and actions, emotional behaviour regulation, using social information, noticing and interpreting cues, planning what to do, problem solving, making and keeping friends.

Different Kids Same Classroom, McGrath, H. & Noble, T. 1993. 66.0567.01
This book is designed to assist teachers of students with a wide range of abilities, aptitudes and talents, in their class. It presents practical inclusive teaching strategies that provide ways in which all students can be included in lessons yet still have their individual needs met.

Life Skills Activities for Secondary Students With Special Needs, 2nd Ed, Mannix, D. 2009. 66.1431.01
This resource provides parents and teachers with activities, discussion questions and evaluation suggestions to help adolescents with special needs acquire the basic skills they need to achieve independence and success in everyday life. It is divided into six skill sections, including self awareness, people, academic, practical living, vocational and problems solving skills.

All Children Are Special, Berberich, C. & Lang, G. 1995. 34.0120.01
This book provides practical information and strategies for creating an inclusive classroom. It is designed for teachers as a guide to help go beyond basic integration of children with special needs. Topics covered include, planning, teaching strategies and approaches, inclusion and using resources and support.

Values book 1, Clutterbuck, P. 2009. 66.1414.01
In part one of this book, students are introduced to the concept of values at a societal / global level and challenged to think about their own values. Part two enables students to recognise and understand the worth of specific values through activities and worksheets.

This resource address the need for social skills programming for children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders and other social difficulties. It provides a comprehensive model that incorporates the following five steps: assess social functioning, distinguish between skill acquisition and performance deficits, select intervention strategies, implement intervention and evaluate and monitor progress.

The Inclusive Teaching Strategies Book, Marshall, J. 2008. 34.0149.01
This book is designed to support the literacy development of students at all levels and to support teachers working with students with diverse needs. It identifies core skills that are required by all students to experience success.
ARTICLES RELATED TO THE TOPIC

Collaboration to Promote Social Competence for Students with Mild Disabilities in the General Classroom
Meadan, H; Monda - Amaya, Lisa
Intervention in School and Clinic
Vol 43 No 3, January 2008 ► SERU 1540

Making the Multicultural Learning Environment Flourish. The Importance of the Child-Teacher Relationship in Educating Young Children
Vuckovic, Aleksandra
Australian Journal of Early Childhood
Vol 33 No 1, March 2008 ► SERU 1589

It's in the Cards. A Class Wide Management System to Promote Student Success
Murphy, Sashaa; Korinek, Lori
Intervention in School and Clinic
Vol 44 No 5, May 2009 ► SERU 1736

Learning To Read In Mathematics Classrooms
Meaney, Tasmin; Flett, Kirsten
Australian Mathematics Teacher, The
Vol 62 No 2, 2006 ► SERU 1237

20 Ways to ... Build Community and Empower Students
Obenchain, Kathryn; Abernathy, Tammy
Intervention in School and Clinic
Vol 39 No 1, September 2003 ► SERU 0675

Partnerships in Learning - Linking Early Childhood Services, Families and Schools for Optimal Development
Ashton, Jean et al
Australian Journal of Early Childhood
Vol 33 No 2, June 2008 ► SERU 1607

Preparing Children For School - Benefits and Privileges
Margetts, K
Australian Journal of Early Childhood
Vol 32 No 2, June 2007 ► SERU 1498

Strategies for Supporting Transition of Young Children with Special Needs and their Families
Rous, Beth et al
Journal of Early Intervention
Vol 30 No 1, Autumn 2007 ► SERU 1554

Improving the Transfer to Secondary School: How Every Child’s Voice Can Matter
Ashton, Rebecca
Support for Learning
Vol 23 No 4, November 2008 ► SERU 1670

Star Transitions Through Partnerships
Hockey, Anthony
Professional Educator
Vol 8 No 3, September 2009 ► SERU 1604

WEB LINKS

Get Organized! Preparing Your Classroom for Learning
This article provides a checklist for ensuring that your classroom is a positive, meaningful learning environment.

Classroom Organization: The Physical Environment
This article describes the importance of a good physical layout for a classroom.

A website on Learning Disabilities for parents, teachers and other professionals.
http://ldonline.org/

This website provides articles and resources around a differentiated student-centered curriculum that is layered to encourage complex thinking.
http://www.help4teachers.com/

This website offers a range of strategies to get students to respond to questions and increase class participation.
http://www.usp.edu/teaching/tips/spal.shtml
Research into emerging inclusive learning technologies at SERU during 2010 has included trial and evaluation of mobile digital tools that offer opportunities for personalised, multimodal learning as emphasised in the Teaching for Effective Learning (TfEL) framework. A particular focus has been the use of iPad/iPod Touch and digital pen technology for a range of learners in varied specialised and integrated contexts. Mobile digital tools move with students to where learning occurs and media rich applications enable user interaction and activity content to be adapted to suit the motivation and learning needs of individual students.

iPad and iPod Touch (and iPhone) support access to a differentiated curriculum through apps that support communication, reading, writing and organisation. SERU has done some trialling and evaluation of a number of these apps including:

**Pencast Player**
Application powered by Livescribe that allows you to download, view and play smartpen notes, audio recordings, or interactive pencasts.

**Dragon Dictation**
Voice recognition application powered by Dragon NaturallySpeaking that allows you to speak and instantly see text. Up to five times faster than typing on the keyboard.

**Type-O HD**
Word prediction app with phonetic spell checker. Click the “play” icon next to any prediction option and hear it spoken to find out if it is the desired word.
**TechBits**

**PopOut! Peter**

Features include: touching/dragging objects to make them “spring” to life or tilting to watch them slide and move; engaging music, and sound effects, have the story read with word highlighting; hear individual words spoken with the tap of a finger; and realistic page turning interactions.

**Proloquo2Go**

Provides a full-featured augmentative and alternative communication solution with natural sounding text-to-speech voices, high resolution symbols, automatic conjugations, a default vocabulary of over 7000 items, expandability and customisation.

**Tap Speak Sequence**

Create and save message sequences. Setup includes an unlimited number of sequences and sequence/phrase recording length; graphic selection from a number of geometric symbols/colors or user photographs/drawings; configurable tap response to accommodate kids with varying motor skill levels; basic usage tracking; reorderable phrase sequencing and modifiable phrases.

**Speak it!**

Paste copied text into Speak it! to have it spoken back to you. You can also create audio files of the text to speech that can then be saved.

**AudioNote**

Note and audio recorder with the capacity to synchronise recorded audio with noted text. Text and drawings highlight during playback helping you to remember the context in which the audio was recorded.
NEW RESOURCES

**Explaining Cystic Fibrosis**, Powell, J. 2009. 66.1428.01

**Explaining Cerebral Palsy**, Levete, S. 2010. 66.1428.02

**Explaining Autism**, Snedden, R. 2010. 66.1428.03

**Explaining Down Syndrome**, Royston, A. 2010. 66.1428.04

**Explaining Epilepsy**, Bender, L. 2010. 66.1428.05

**Explaining Deafness**, Levete, S. 2010. 66.1428.06

The six books in this series describe the condition and how they affect people. Case studies and technological advancements are explained with real life photographs. Suitable for primary and middle school students.

**Rainbow Fraction Dominoes**, 2010. 64.1423.01

This game of dominoes is played with cards. Each card shows a fraction as a numeral and as a graphic. An activity guide leaflet contains instruction for 2 games. 2-4 players.


Drawing on personal experience as a person with Asperger's Syndrome, the contributors to this book give valuable information about their experiences in the workforce and the issues they have faced in employment. Included is advice to employers and ways in which employment agencies can positively assist people with Asperger's Syndrome.

**Fractions Pack**. 64.1416.01

The book and various activities in this pack are aimed at developing a basic understanding of fractions as well as an understanding of percentages, decimals and fractions. The pack are suitable for primary years students.

**Small Knob Variety Objects Puzzle**. 83.1662.01

This 15 piece wooden jigsaw puzzle, with small knobs, helps develop fine motor skills in students. It could also be used to develop vocabulary in early years students.

**Multiplication Tables Pack**. 64.1415.01

The book and materials in this pack are designed for student understanding, practice and consolidation of the multiplication tables to x 12. They are suitable for students in the primary and middle years of schooling.

**Zoob Junior**. 83.1653.01

Zoob is a building set with a difference. Once connected, creations are moveable. This version has larger softer pieces than the original and has just three basic shapes to snap, click and pop together. Instruction cards are included and provide samples of models to build.

**Visual Thinking Strategies for Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders**, Arwood, E. 61.1015.01

This book alerts readers to the fact that many students with ASD process their world differently. They need visual information presented to facilitate their individual thinking and learning.


Set one 63.3264.01

Set two 63.3265.01

Each of the tales in these sets introduces children to one of the 25 most frequently used word families based on rhyme. Each starts with short word vowels and progresses to long vowels and is suitable for beginning readers. It has been divided into two small packs, each containing a teacher guide as well as a selection of readers.

**Large Garage Play Pack**. 63.2033.01

This play pack includes a large wooden garage with petrol pumps and a ramp, a selection of vehicles and people. It encourages socio-dramatic play and language development and is suitable for students up to approximately year 4.

**Yarnin’ It Up : Learning to Listen and Talk, Activities for Young Aboriginal Children**, Snodgrass, F. & Hickman, M. 2009 17.191.01

This resource provides parents and early childhood educators with a collection of pre literacy activities to use with young children aged from birth to 36 months. It aims to assist in developing strong listening and oral language skills.
NEW RESOURCES

Tasks Galore: Let’s Play, Eckenrode, L. et al. 2010. 19.0246.02
From the Tasks Galore series for people with autism spectrum disorders and other visual learners, this book focuses on the correlation between pretend play and cognitive development using play as a vehicle for learning.

Tasks Galore: Making Groups Meaningful, Eckenrode, L. et al. 2010. 19.0246.03
From the Tasks Galore series for people with autism spectrum disorders and other visual learners, this book focuses on strategies to make groups meaningful to students and reinforce positive feelings about group learning.

Tasks Galore For The Real World, Eckenrode, L. et al. 2010. 19.0246.04
From the Tasks Galore series for people with autism spectrum disorders and other visual learners, this book focuses on independent living skills including skills for the workplace. It presents ideas for creating tasks for students who benefit from multi modal presentations, which incorporate visual, tactile and motor components.

Possum & Wattle : A Big Book of Australian Words, Bancroft, B. 2010. 61.1014.01
This picture alphabet book for young children, introduces words from the Australian environment and has an illustration for each word. The illustrator has used aboriginal style art from her father’s Djanbun background.

Intervention Resource for Phonological Process, 1996. 63.3262.01
This intervention program places an emphasis on phonological process rather than individual phonemes. The underpinning philosophy is that improvements in speech intelligibility is likely to occur more rapidly and efficiently using this methodology. Designed for students between three and eight years.

Sounds Funtastics, 2000. 63.3267.01
The activities in this book can be used to facilitate improved speech intelligibility and to encourage phonemic awareness in students up to years 3/4 and could also be used with older students experiencing difficulties with reading and spelling.

The Red Beast : Controlling Anger In Children with Asperger's Syndrome, AL-Ghani, K. 2008. 60.1056.01
In this picture book, Rufus, a boy with Asperger’s syndrome learns strategies to tame his Red Beast ie to control his anger. Alternate strategies are provided at the end of the book. Suitable for students R-7.

The Incredible 5-point Scale, Dunn, B. & Curtis, M. 2003. 66.1376.01
This book utilises a five point scale approach to assist learners with autism spectrum disorders to understand social interactions and control their emotional responses.

The Friendship Puzzle: Helping Kids Learn About Accepting and Including Kids with Autism, Coe, J. 2009. 66.1441.01
This story relates how a girl is motivated to learn to become friends with a new boy in her class who has autism. It is suitable for primary years students.

That's Life Set 1, Lorbieki, M. 66.1443.01
This book tells the story of a young boy and his father who steal out of the house before light, to witness the magic of dawn. Along the way they communicate in a variety of ways, including signing.

Key Into Evaluation, Parkin, C. 2008. 63.3282.01
This pack is divided into three increasingly complex text levels; 8-10years, 10-12 years and 12 -14 years. All levels have both fiction and non fiction text. The reader is required to refer to information given and utilise their reorganisation and inference skills to answer evaluative questions.

Key Into Reorganisation, Parkin, C. 2008. 63.3273.01
This pack is divided into three increasingly complex text levels; 8-10years, 10-12 years and 12 -14 years. Learners progress from reading short paragraphs of fiction and non fiction text to longer more complex pieces. Within each sample, the reader is required to bring together two or more separate pieces of information from within the text.

Wooden Toll Box With Tools. 83.1659.01
This solid wooden toolbox contains various tools and construction pieces. It is suitable for perceptual motor development and socio dramatic play for students up to years 3/4.
The theme for the next edition of SERUpdate is Learning Difficulties.

Contributors for this edition may like to consider the following guiding statements when formulating an article:

• describe systems for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing your school programs
• describe the resources and approaches to support students with learning difficulties. This could be in the area of wellbeing, literacy or numeracy
• describe how you create a flexible learning environment to cater for students experiencing difficulties in learning eg. accommodating preferred learning modalities.

Would you like to contribute an article?
SERUpdate relies heavily on the willingness of DECS personnel to contribute articles. Feedback from readers confirms that contributions from sites are a valuable way of keeping informed with what is happening at other schools. Contributing an article has also proved to be a valuable exercise in assisting school based contributors document their site plan initiatives.

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