The Fifth Annual Special Education Expo has successfully been held at the Education Development Centre, Hindmarsh in the first three days of the July school holidays.

Once again there has been wonderful support from teachers, SSOs, early childhood workers and families in registering and attending workshops.

The Special Education Expo is now firmly established as a regular feature in the calendar of many educators. Planning has already begun for the Sixth Special Education Expo in July 2009.

The Expo provides a range of opportunities for teachers, district support personnel and educators to increase their awareness and knowledge about the effective teaching and learning strategies and resources that support learners who have disabilities and learning difficulties. This year there were over 90 presentations and workshops for educators and parents provided by 110 presenters with an opportunity for people to visit The Briars Special Early Learning Centre on the first morning of the Expo. The information and strategies presented highlighted good teaching practice and are relevant to all learners.

The generosity of presenters who were prepared to develop and present practical, up to date information on a broad range of topics in the strands of wellbeing, inclusive technology, behaviour, communication, disability, and learning difficulties ensured that all expo participants went away from the expo with strategies and ideas that could be implemented and incorporated into classrooms practice. Feedback from participants included

- I enjoyed the diversity of presentation that included two presenters, a DVD and resources
- I'm going to rethink the effectiveness of the strategies I use with particular students
- I'll use more visuals to support instructions
- What a great expo! We are desperately saving to join you again next July
- We are also going to spread the word as this would be a great event for our special education colleagues to attend.
- Once again, thanks a million to the organisers and presenters for a stimulating, informative and practical three days.

Presenters of workshops represented specific areas of expertise and good practice from all education sectors and support services in South Australia and from eastern states. The Special Education Expo provided opportunity to partner with a number of agencies including Novita Tech, Autism SA, Down Syndrome Association and SPELD. My sincere thanks to all for presenting workshops and for sharing their knowledge and expertise at display and trade tables.
INTRODUCTION

There have been several new innovations this year in the use of technology. CENTRA was used to broadcast some of the presentations live on the web this allows people to access presentations through the internet. Although the number of registrations for this type of approach were small there is great potential for people from remote and isolated areas to access information at future expos. These recordings can be downloaded from www.centra.sa.edu.au/main/seru. The free Centra software is required to view these recordings. The installation file can be downloaded from the Centra page on the Special Education Expo website (see link on the SERU website: web.seru.sa.edu.au).

The staff at SERU have continued to be outstanding partners in all aspects of the Special Education Expo through registration support, establishing procedures to ensure technology could be used effectively and efficiently in workshops and in the provision of a display of SERU resources. I look forward to 2009 when we will add online registration to our administrative processes.

My thanks to all the people who have supported and attended the Special Education Expo and in particular to the Special Education Expo committee Helen Kowalenko, Cathy Clark, Kathy Meredith, Elizabeth Andrew, Robert Keage, Paul Bolton and Jenny McGinn. I look forward to an even more exciting Special Education Expo in 2009 that will provide parents and educators with the opportunity to participate in a vibrant learning community.

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FARMYARD HULLABALOO

Creating a differentiated curriculum by embedding an interactive whiteboard and inclusive technologies.

Meeting the learning needs of students in the early childhood classroom can be a challenge. Teachers need to make reasonable adjustment to their curriculum to ensure all students are participating and engaging in the learning process. (Disability Standards for Education 2005)

When developing differentiated curriculum units it is beneficial to consider the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) guidelines developed by CAST (Centre for Applied Special Technology). They have identified three main focuses: “multiple means of representation” ensures information is presented to students in a variety of formats enabling better access; “multiple means of expression” allows students to express their understanding of concepts in a variety of ways; and “multiple means of engagement” increases the learner’s motivation to engage in learning activities. (CAST, 2008)

The use of technology enables information to be represented in a variety of formats, provides learners with a variety of means of expressing their understanding and frequently increases the motivation of the learners. Also, using technology to create learning activities enables the teacher to more easily present information at different levels of understanding.

Creating a Hullabaloo!!!

The farmyard is a popular theme for young learners. It presents a variety of learning opportunities and experiences – exploring life cycles by incubating eggs, excursions to farms and seeing variety of animals, classifying animals into their habitats, and creating story after story.

Explore what software is installed on school computers as well as what is readily available.
There are a number of Australian created software packages that can be effectively used to provide extra support and extended activities at a variety of learning levels. *PM Readers* software provides electronic versions of *PM Readers* to listen to as well as activities for story retellings and reinforcing word understanding and reading comprehension. Use *Word Wizard* to set up individual student profiles for practice with spelling and word usage. *Targeting Maths* provides a variety of fun interactive activities to support numeracy understanding and development.

An effective way to create electronically based themed activities that also meet a variety of learning needs is to develop skills in using such programs as *Boardmaker, Kidspiration* and *Inspiration, PowerPoint* and *Clicker 5*. As well, it is helpful to learn how to use interactive whiteboards and the associated software, such as *SMART Notebook*.

Use *Boardmaker* to create visual schedules of the day’s activities. Create hard copy versions and electronics ones by importing the images into a *PowerPoint* presentation and hyper-linking them to digital activities. Small groups or individual students can then quickly access the computer based activity that is scheduled for them.

To start the day, search the *SMART Notebook* gallery for a blank calendar and some weather clip art. Make a set of the images so students can drag a weather picture onto today’s date. Students and staff can also write or type in up-coming celebrations, excursions and other special events. Save the calendars and use them to review the weeks, months, terms and even the year’s activities. Print them off to make a year book.

Students can easily use technology to create the front cover of their theme books and have the opportunity to give clear directions about place and perspective. Create a template image on *SMART Notebook* using clip art from the gallery. Students then pair up at the IWB with one student telling the other where to move the pictures and what size to make them. Their instructions need to be clear if the partner is to create their picture correctly. If a student struggles with this process then a staff member can sit with them beforehand to help them decide how they want their picture and assist in recording the steps into a communication device such as a *Step-by-Step by Ablenet*. When all is done, save it and print it off!

*The Little Red Hen* (Galdone, 1979) is a familiar story for many. Create a character exploration using a mind map with *Inspiration*. Set up the key characters first and import images from the symbol palette to represent them. Add a “Not I” speech bubble for the other characters then utilize the hide option by leaving only “Not I” bubbles on the screen. Have the students discuss Little Red Hen’s work habits and add their supporting statements into the bubbles of the mind map. Students can easily make recordings of ideas rather than type them. Click on the *Listen* icon to hear text in the bubbles. Now hide this information so it doesn’t clutter the screen while students explore the other characters. Can the students remember which characters said, “Not I”? 
Can they add in information about why the character said that?

I Went Walking (Machin, 1989) is a popular book with young children and is a great model for creating more stories. Use Clicker 5 to create a talking book about the class trip to the farm. Import images of the children and work together to type in the text. Students can then read the book themselves or click on the speaker button to have it read to them. It is also easy for students to record their voices into the story.

Continue with this exploration by using Clicker 5 to create sentences building activities where the student can use a learning grid to create their own story in the document file. Create the first set with a modeled sentence and word cells set up in the correct left to right order. Students with beginning literacy skills can click on the modeled sentence to hear it and then click on the word cells to create their own story. A linked page of animal pictures allows them to choose what animal they saw. This activity can be easily changed to meet the needs of students whose literacy skills are a little more developed. Move the word cells around so the student has to check them all out and match them before sending them to the document. (If the student wants to listen to a word before sending it to their story page, all they have to do is right-click on it.) For the next level, remove the written modeled sentence and add a speaker button that will say the modeled sentence when the students click on it. For the last level, remove all models. Encourage students to type in their own choice of words at any time.

Take some photos of the eggs in the incubator and create a life cycle diagram using Kidspiration. This can be done before hand or with the students. Import images of chicken, hens, roosters, eggs, nests, hatching chicks, etc. into a symbol palette. Once the original life cycle has been developed and discussed, students can recreate their own. Create a version that has just the words and the student can drag in the appropriate pictures. A quick click on the bubble will read the words aloud for those needing more literacy support. Create another life cycle chart with only the empty circles so students can type or record the steps and drag the pictures to recreate the cycle. These mindmaps can be used as a supported learning activity, an independent activity, or an assessment activity.

Kidspiration is more than just a mindmapping program. It is easy to create classifying activities.
Create a page with four labeled sorting boxes – “Lives in the ocean”, “Lives in the bush”, “Lives on the farm”, boxes – “Lives in the ocean”, “Lives in the bush”, “Lives on the farm”, “Lives in the desert”. Students drag pictures from the symbol palette into the boxes. To create an easier version of this activity, delete two of the choices and drag pictures onto the screen so the student will just need to drag the pictures and drop them into the correct boxes.

Farmyard Hullabaloo is an example of how using technology enables teachers to easily create a wide variety of activities that suit the topic being studied. With a few quick clicks of the mouse, these activities can be differentiated to ensure students at different learning levels can successfully access, engage, and achieve.

References:

TEACHING RELAXATION

We all experience stress in our lives. Some stress is good, it helps us stay alert and get ready to perform at our full potential. How we cope with the stress is the important determinant in whether it becomes a problem in our lives. When students become stressed at school and the stress builds up without adequate buffers and adaptive behaviours we find that their responses can be detrimental to the learning process. Teaching students relaxation skills will benefit them at school and throughout life.
The Stress Response
The automatic stress response results in:
- Increased heart rate
- Increased blood pressure
- Increased breathing rate and shallow breathing
- Increased blood flow to the muscles
- Decreased blood flow to vital organs
- Increased release of sugar (glucose) and cholesterol into the bloodstream
- Increased oxygen requirements
- Increased alertness of the mind
- Increased production of Beta brain waves.

The stress response prepares us for the fight or flight which is great if that’s what we need to do in an emergency situation but can be detrimental in a classroom situation. When a student becomes stressed, their:
- Understanding of language decreases
- Ability to adequately express self decreases
- Awareness of others is reduced
- Awareness of given cues is reduced
- Ability to concentrate is reduced
- Ability to focus on relevant information is reduced
- Coping with sensory input is reduced
- Ability to control behaviour decreases.

The Relaxation Response
The relaxation response:
- Is nature’s own medicine
- Is more effective than tranquilisers in the management of anxiety
- Has no negative side effects
- Does not lead to unhealthy addiction or dependency
- Is a natural process

The relaxation response involves activating that part of our nervous system which quiets our mind and restores our energy.

Activities that help induce a RELAXATION RESPONSE can be PHYSICAL or PASSIVE (MENTAL) or a combination of both. Everyone is different so the relaxation activities chosen must suit the individual or group you are working with.

Physical Relaxation
Physical relaxation can be achieved using a range of different stretches, exercises and movements that suit the particular individual or group. Physical relaxation begins to induce mental relaxation.
Examples include:

- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Brain Gym®
- Deep Pressure Massage
- Yoga
- Tai Chi
- Stretching Exercises
- Swinging on a swing or hammock
- Jumping on a trampoline
- Juggling

Progressive Muscle Relaxation:

- Requires practice.
- Can be guided verbally or using picture cues.
- Can be practiced in a group or individually.
- Will begin to induce mental relaxation.

An example script for progressive muscle tension and relaxation

Make yourself comfortable lying or sitting down.

Gently and slowly close your eyes.
(The first few times you practice this with children it may be preferable to allow them to keep their eyes open so they can see each aspect of the activity demonstrated).

Now gradually close your eyes more and more tightly until they are screwed and scrunched up, hold for 1…2…3 and then let them go. Let them go loose, floppy and relaxed.

Press your lips together firmly, hold 1…2…3 and let them go and RELAX.

Keeping your lips closed, push your mouth and cheeks out into a smile, hold 1…2…3 and let them go and RELAX.

With your lips closed, push your mouth and lips forward, hold 1…2…3 and let them go and RELAX.

Shoulders, Neck and Chest
Push your shoulders up to your ears and hold your neck tight 1…2…3 and let them go, RELAX.

With your arms by your sides, push your shoulders back and hold your arms stiff 1…2…3, RELAX.

Arms, Hands and Fingers

Clench your fists tightly, notice the tension in your hands and your arms, hold 1…2…3 and RELAX. Notice the difference between the tension and the relaxation. Let your hands and arms be loose, floppy and relaxed.

Stomach

Tense the muscles in your stomach by pulling them in and holding them tight, hold for 1…2…3 and RELAX.

Thighs, Legs, Feet and Toes

Hold your thighs, legs and feet as tight as you can and curl your toes under, hold for 1…2…3 and RELAX.

Whole body at the same time

Now try to tighten all the muscles in your body at the same time, you may like to start at the top with your head and work your way down to your toes, when every muscle is tense hold it for 1…2…3 and RELAX. Your whole body should feel heavy and relaxed.

Breathe slowly and deeply and every time you breath out you feel heavier and heavier.

To relax like this gives you a pleasant rest. Afterwards you'll feel calm and relaxed.

Mental Relaxation

Mental relaxation can be achieved through slowing the breathing rate and creating a feeling of calmness that slows the brain wave pattern from beta to alpha. Guided imagery can be used to help students in this process.

An example script for guided imagery to help induce mental relaxation

The following script can be read to children and is designed to help them make pictures in their minds of a pleasant, relaxing experience to
help them calm down after a stressful situation, to help reduce stress built up during the day, or at the end of the day to wind down and get ready for sleep. Read slowly and quietly. Relaxing music can be played in the background.

Make yourself comfortable sitting or lying down. Close your eyes lightly.

Clench your left hand very tightly into a fist and take a very deep breath.

Hold your breath and notice the tension in your hand, arm, chest and lungs.

Breathe out and relax. Feel how your body is relaxed and calm.

Notice the relaxation spreading throughout your whole body.

Every time you breathe out you deepen your relaxation. Continue breathing slowly in and out.

Clear your mind and concentrate on my voice because you are going to use your imagination to make a very special picture. You won’t actually do anything or move around you will just see yourself in your mind.

Feel yourself in your own quiet, quiet space.

Now you are going to build a wall around your quiet space. Make it a high wall and make a secret door in your wall. No one else will know where the door is, just you. You can paint the secret door in your favourite colour.

Your wall is now finished and you can go in and out through the door as you please.

Go through the door into your quiet place and close it behind you. Look around your quiet place and see the wall and the door. You can now choose something to lie on that is very soft and comfortable; it could be a bed or a soft cosy rug, or some soft smooth grass, or a fluffy white cloud. In your mind feel what you are going to lie on. Now lie down gently.

It is so soft and comfortable, let yourself sink down, down into its softness. Your whole body is light and soft, calm and peaceful.

Allow a minute or two of relaxation time.

Now you are going to get ready to leave your quiet, comfortable place. In your mind get up from your soft comfortable lying place and imagine stretching your body. Now, find your secret door and say goodbye to your space.

Slowly open the door and let yourself out and shut the door behind you. Now you are back in the room at (name the place). Gently wiggle your fingers and your toes. Stretch your body. Take a deep breath and open your eyes feeling really good inside.

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Rickard, Jenny (1994) Relaxation for Children, ACER.

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Preparing today’s youth to succeed in the digital economy requires a new kind of teaching and learning. Skills such as global literacy, computer literacy, problem solving, critical thinking, creativity and innovation have become critical in today’s increasingly interconnected workforce and society—and technology is the catalyst for bringing these changes into the classroom. In a 21st-century learning environment, all students are able to learn. Project-based learning allows students to acquire 21st-century skills in the context of real-world scenarios, and the integration of video and other media to support instruction links students with outside resources and enables teachers to address many learning styles at once. In fact, the 21st-century learning environment doesn’t just wait for teachable moments; it literally creates them at will. (Jacobson, Ed 2008)

Inclusive education is the provision of a learning environment that takes into account the learning needs of all students (gifted, special needs of all types and degrees, English as a Second Language) regardless of ability or learning style, providing a learning environment which is as flexible and accommodating as possible.

To achieve this, the environment has to have information which can be accessed in a variety of ways to accommodate auditory, visual and motor learners. Students need to be able to respond to tasks and interact with learning materials in different ways. The curriculum needs to be flexible enough to accommodate all needs with different goals and abilities catered for in the design and activities and alternatives built in to materials, equipment, instruction and activities, not added as afterthoughts.

There is increasingly strong evidence to show that used effectively technology can help narrow the gap between highest and lowest achievers and can help more people to continue successfully in learning and motivate and support those who are disaffected and disengaged (Becta, 2007).

The interactive whiteboard (IWB) can be the hub which integrates computers, data projectors, cameras, scanners, PDA and so many more pieces of technology and link the classroom to the rest of the world via the Web. It is the medium by which the techno-phobic teacher can be gradually introduced into teaching with technology because it links so readily with the all familiar world of blackboards and whiteboards. But above all, because of all the above, it is a means by which we can produce truly universal education.

With the click of a button, students can access audio, video, zoomed text, subtitles and sign language. Access can be via large movements, head pointers, a key pad on a wheelchair, or voice activation by computer. Because of the multimedia nature of 21st-century life, increasingly, we are not just producing this type of lesson for one or two but for the benefit of the whole class.

Even today some teachers might not be aware of the opportunities -- while others might simply be reluctant to change their methods -- in the final analysis, the resistors will have to change because students will demand it. (Jacobson, Ed 2008)

Literacy has, and is continuing to change; it is no longer purely print-based. It is a mix of images of many kinds linked with print and audio. The modern student must be able to read and comprehend from a far wider range of inputs than the traditional student.
The primary literacy of the 21st century will be visual: pictures, graphics, and images of every kind ... it's no longer enough to be able to read and write. Our students must learn to process both words and pictures. They must be able to move gracefully and fluently between text and images, between literal and figurative worlds. (Jacobson, Ed 2008)

The idea of ICT as an optional extra that can be contained in a computer suite for one or two lessons a week is long gone. For education to be relevant to 21st-century life the computer needs to be an integral part of daily learning and teaching and the interactive whiteboard is one of the mediums best placed to do that.

Most teachers are familiar with the quote, often attributed to Glasser, but which actually originated from the work of Edgar Dale in the 1960s.

We remember...
- 10% of what we read
- 20% of what we hear
- 30% of what we see
- 50% of what we see and hear
- 70% of what we say
- 90% of what we say and do.

No one is quite sure who added the percentages but any researcher should be immediately suspicious of such well rounded figures. What Dale was actually depicting was the relationship between the degree of abstraction in learning and retention moving from real-world experiences to text. Access to the Internet, sound and video are all means of bringing real-life experiences into the classroom. Our traditional method of text based learning is at the extreme end of the scale. Whoever added percentages to the kind of learning were looking for a silver bullet... a simplistic approach to a complex issue......the percentages stated were a simplistic way to explain a complex phenomenon. (Metiri Group, 2008:8) Another simplistic approach is a picture is worth a thousand words, which is thought to originate from an ancient Chinese proverb. Fortunately we can now measure with MRI scans how the brain actually processes different types of information. Although research in these areas is still in its infancy, it is now well accepted that we process visual data very differently from text, audio and sound. Indeed visuals are processed in entirely separate channels from text and auditory input. It is also firmly established that a well-designed combination of visuals and text helps us learn more than text alone in many cases. Research thus far indicates that in general, multimodal learning has been shown to be more effective than traditional uni-modal learning and that most effective learning occurs when a variety of media, modalities, levels and types of interaction, learner characteristics and pedagogy are considered. What is absolutely clear is that one size does not fit all learners and the old text based learning has got to go. However, research also indicates clearly that doing is not always more efficient than seeing and seeing is not always more effective than reading. (Metiri Group, 2008:8) It is becoming apparent that interaction helps multi modal learning of moderate to complex topics but hinders when learning and building automaticity with basic skills. This type of research is also clarifying some design issues for interactive whiteboard use such as those quoted in the list of learning principles for multimedia (based on the work of Richard Mayer, Roxanne Moreno):

- Multimedia Principle: Retention is improved through words and pictures rather than through words alone.
- Spatial Contiguity Principle: Students learn better when corresponding words and pictures are presented near each other, rather than far from each other on the page or screen.
- Temporal Contiguity Principle: Students learn better when corresponding words and pictures are presented simultaneously rather than successively.
Coherence Principle: Students learn better when extraneous words, pictures, and sounds are excluded rather than included.

Modality Principle: Students learn better from animation and narration than from animation and on-screen text.

Individual Differences Principle: Design effects are higher for low-knowledge learners than for high-knowledge learners. Also, design effects are higher for high-spatial learners than for low-spatial learners.

Direct Manipulation Principle: As the complexity of the materials increases, the impact of direct manipulation (animation, pacing) of the learning materials on the transfer of knowledge also increases. (Metiri Group, 2008:12)

So what are the implications of all this on the uptake and daily classroom use of interactive whiteboards? As teachers we have to get on board with technology. One of the most efficient and effective ways of doing this is via the interactive whiteboard because it is the means of integrating so much technology smoothly into the classroom. It is the way we can more easily cater to the differing needs of students. To be used effectively, the interactive whiteboard needs to be used as a class teaching tool, a medium for group learning and also for individual work. Lessons developed for the board may be accessed via the board but also of via tablet PCs, desktop computers or handheld devices. The discerning teacher will realise that there are some things which are still better accomplished in other ways and that the interactive whiteboard needs to be used in conjunction with a variety of other materials.

Most of all the interactive whiteboard needs to be seen as a tool for change. Change of the outdated pedagogy used by many teachers today. We need to take care that the interactive whiteboard is not just a high-priced tool to support outmoded pedagogies of direct instruction – an electronic version of chalk and talk or an expensive type of death by PowerPoint. The real value of the IWB comes when teachers can be persuaded to get out of their comfort zones and look at new ways of teaching and learning which interactive whiteboards can so easily facilitate. When teachers spend more time posing the problems and asking the questions than they do providing the answers or better still helping students to pose their own questions, then we will begin to see the real value of IWB. Many teachers will find that they benefit from revisiting the theories of learning styles and teaching styles long left behind in teacher training days. Some further research into questioning types and styles is also of great benefit when considered in the light of using an IWB.

What are the practical aspects of the interactive whiteboard which make it such a great tool for inclusion?

1. It can easily display graphics of all kinds for both input of ideas and for students to demonstrate their knowledge.
2. Sound functions can be used for the input of ideas and to record students’ ideas. This makes it so much easier for those who struggle with writing to become contributing members of the class.
3. Colour of background text can be readily changed and individualised either on the whiteboard itself or on the screen of a PC linked to the whiteboard. This helps to accommodate students with a number of different vision issues.
4. The size of screen objects can easily be zoomed for sight impaired or relayed to a personal PC for individual resizing.
5. Video captions can be added for the hearing impaired.
6. The creative teacher can find many ways for students to manipulate information on the screen which aids those who need this to help them learn.
7. For those who are learning a new language, it is so easy to add sound and graphics to aid their learning and speed up their progress.
8. Those that need to revisit work for varying reasons can easily retrieve work for use later on.
9. Those who cannot copy notes from the board can have work printed or saved for later use or even emailed to them.
10. Lessons can easily accommodate the inclusion of scaffolding for those who need it.
11. For those with physical disabilities many find access in large arm movements on the board much easier, access can also be arranged for wheelchairs via a ramp, for use of alternative means of input such as head pointers.
12. Students in the autism spectrum find some aspects of interactive whiteboard use beneficial, for example; the very physical nature of sharing by actually handing over the pen or pointer, the physical manipulation of items in the daily schedule on the board seems to aid many, role-play and video of social situations is also beneficial. There are occasions when the high interactivity of the board becomes distressing to these students and at this point they can be encouraged to retreat to the safety of an individual computer where they can have more control over the sound and video which they are receiving.

The challenge is for the teacher to know their IWB, know the software, know the possibilities and write into the lesson plan what is needed for students of all learning styles and stages to access the curriculum and demonstrate their knowledge of it. In most cases if a teacher knows the possibilities but not the technology the digital natives are more than happy to assist with how to achieve it. Unfortunately in far too many classrooms at the moment, teachers are unaware of the possibilities, too terrified by the technology to try and too insecure to let the students show them how.

The IWB certainly can be a tool for inclusive education; the reality is that at the moment it is rarely used as such. For this to happen, teachers need far more training in what IWB can actually do and they need to be open to far reaching changes to their pedagogy. If they have the knowledge of what the board can do, the imagination to let it do it, then IWB can change the whole style of teaching and learning. It can be a means to truly inclusive education if we the educators will let it. It can certainly make learning more exciting for both students and teachers.

Resources on Questioning

<http://www.edb.utexas.edu/pbl/tips/question.html>

<http://members.shaw.ca/mdde615/teachstylesquiz7.htm>


<http://www.longleaf.net/teachingstyle.html>

Teaching Styles Self Evaluation

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INTERACTIVE WHITEBOARDS—A TOOL FOR AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM


Metiri Group Multimodal Learning Through

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR—ASSESSMENT & SUPPORT OF FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION

Children with challenging behaviours, developmental disability and limited or no speech often pose challenges for teachers, families and service providers. Their difficulties in communication make it a challenge for support staff and teachers to determine what the students’ want, need or are trying to express (Mancil, Conroy & Nakao, 2006). Researchers have demonstrated that challenging or problematic behaviour in children with complex needs can often be interpreted as a form of communication (Casey & Merical, 2006). For example, a student may engage in self-injury to gain attention. Consider the example of Jeremy.

Jeremy is 14 years old. He has a severe intellectual disability and a visual impairment. He is able to imitate his name, yes and no but does not respond to questions reliably. Often when he is left alone he will slap his face several times, so hard that he leaves red marks all over his face. The behaviour cannot be ignored because staff are concerned he will cause injury.

The function of this behaviour may be to get the attention of staff. Someone always comes over to him when he starts to slap his face; he does not slap his face when he is interacting with a person.

Alternatively a student may engage in problematic behaviour to escape or avoid an activity or task. Consider the example of Mary.

Mary is 11 years old. She is able to say yes, no, mum, dad. Her yes/no responses are not reliable but she is beginning to imitate others’ speech. She has a simple 9-cell array speech-generating device but does not use it without prompting. She can discriminate between photos and picture communication symbols on her device.

Mary is compliant and will often begin engaging in tasks. At times, within a few minutes of beginning a task she will begin screaming loudly and throwing the materials being used in the task. She will continue to scream and throw the materials until she is released from the task or it ends. The function of this behaviour may be to escape the task or activity.

These examples illustrate how students may be communicating using their problematic behaviour. In the first example, Jeremy may be communicating a request for attention or social interaction. In the second example, Mary may be communicating that she does not like the activity and wants to stop. Students also may engage in problem behaviour to access preferred activities or avoid ending enjoyable activities. Some may even use challenging behaviour if asked to transition before completing a task. These children have learned effective ways to control their environment through challenging behaviour, thus understanding the purpose of the behaviours will lead to understanding the communicative function (Durand & Carr, 1992).
Functional Communication Training (FCT) is an intervention technique which involves teaching communication skills as an alternative to challenging behaviour. That is, communication serving the same function(s) as the challenging behaviour(s) (Dunlap, Ester, Langhans & Fox, 2006). Positive behaviour support interventions such as FCT are increasingly being recommended for individuals with severe developmental disabilities, including autism, who engage in challenging behaviour and may also use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) (Bopp, Brown & Mirenda, 2004). In FCT the first step is to conduct a Functional Assessment. Conducting a Functional Assessment (FA) or Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA) can be one of the most systematic approaches to understanding the function or purpose of problematic behaviours, leading to the design of effective intervention strategies (Mildon, Moore & Dixon, 2004; Casey & Merical, 2006). This is an important process as function differs between children and across situations or contexts (Dunlap et. al, 2006). This article will present the basic functions of behaviour, outline the process of the Functional Assessment, provide resources for accessing tools and briefly outline considerations for teaching the request and protest communication functions for students with developmental disability who may use limited or no speech and AAC.

Functions of Behaviour

The basic functions of behaviour and corresponding communication functions are outlined in tables 1 and 2.

### Table 1. Functions of Behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functions of Behaviour</th>
<th>Internal or Sensory</th>
<th>External</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To obtain something positive/desired</td>
<td>Visual, tactile, auditory, vestibular etc. or may be other internal stimuli</td>
<td>Attention</td>
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<td>Social interaction</td>
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<td>Items or Objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To avoid or escape something undesirable</td>
<td>Visual, tactile, auditory, vestibular or other internal stimuli (e.g, anxiety)</td>
<td>Attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Items or objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Demands or tasks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2. Communication Functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Communication Functions</th>
<th>Internal</th>
<th>External</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To obtain something positive/desired (The request function) I want……….</td>
<td>To get internal or sensory stimulation</td>
<td>To get help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To get attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To get an object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>To get an activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To avoid or escape something undesirable (The reject or protest function) No/ stop/ I don’t like it / I don’t want…..</td>
<td>internal/sensory stimulation (e.g., too noisy, too busy, hunger, pain, discomfort)</td>
<td>Task or activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Terminating a desirable activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attention or unwanted social interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Items or objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Demands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate the relationship between functions of behaviour and two potential communicative functions; the request and reject functions. It should be noted that other communicative functions may need to be addressed in a student’s communication program and the communication program or plan should be developed in consultation with the Speech Pathologist. However, for emergent communicators, the request and reject communicative functions may serve the equivalent function of the challenging behaviours.

Following the FA, the goal is then to teach the alternative or replacement communication skills that serve the same function as the challenging behaviour. In addition, the FA will determine other variables which may be affecting behaviour (e.g., lack of sleep, medication, noisy environment, transitions, particular peers etc.).

What is Functional Assessment?
Functional Assessment is a process for gathering information that can be used to maximize the effectiveness of behavioral support (O’Neill, Horner, Albin, Sprague, Storey, & Newton, 1997).

O’Neil et al. (1997) list the following as outcomes of the FA:
1. Gives a clear description of the problem behaviour
2. Identifies events, times, situations that predict when behavior will and will not occur
3. Identifies consequences that maintain behaviour (i.e., functions the behaviors might serve for the individual)
4. Develops summary statements/hypotheses, including variables affecting behaviour.
5. Observation data which support summary statements

What follows is the general steps required for conducting the FA. These steps are listed for general information and to develop knowledge of the process. It should be noted that the FA is conducted by an individual’s support team, of whom the teacher would be a member.

**Steps in Conducting the FBA**
1. Label the problem and verify the seriousness/importance of the problem.
2. Clearly define the behaviour.
3. Gather information.
   a. **Informant methods:** Conduct the Functional Assessment Interview (FAI) with significant other or caregiver. Tools can be downloaded from: [http://pbis.org/files/FACTS.doc](http://pbis.org/files/FACTS.doc) (quick and easy tool which can be used for a variety of students exhibiting problem behaviour)
   [http://cecp.air.org/fba/problembehavior2/appendixc.htm](http://cecp.air.org/fba/problembehavior2/appendixc.htm)
   Rating scales may also be used an additional method of gathering informant information. The *Problem Behaviour Questionnaire* is an example.
   [http://cecp.air.org/fba/problembehavior2/appendixe.htm](http://cecp.air.org/fba/problembehavior2/appendixe.htm)
   b. **Conduct direct Observation using a variety of means.** There are several tools available from sources below.

   Excellent teacher tools which include tools (blank forms) for all the steps listed in conducting the FBA/FA.
   Tools for conducting direct observation (ABC Chart, scatter plot and the Functional Assessment Observation form) can all be accessed at this site, including examples and instructions for completion.
   Similar tools can be access at CECP.air.org, including the complete manual with instructions [http://cecp.air.org/fba/problembehavior2/main2.htm](http://cecp.air.org/fba/problembehavior2/main2.htm)
4. Analyse the information (from sources)
   a. Identify the variables affecting behaviour by summarising information from your sources (interviews, rating scales, observations). This can be done via data triangulation, leading to an interpretation of events http://cecp.air.org/fba/problembehavior2/appendixf.htm and/or the use of a Problem Pathway Model http://cecp.air.org/fba/problembehavior2/appendixg.htm leading to the development of a Competing Behaviour Pathway. That is, the design of accommodations and alternative behaviour that maintains the same consequence as the problem behaviour.

5. Develop a hypothesis: What is the function of the behaviour?

6. Test your hypothesis by adjusting the variables you believe are affecting the behaviour. This will confirm the accuracy of your hypothesis. This step may not be necessary. If the team are confident with their assessment and interpretation of information.

The Behaviour Support Plan and Functional Communication Training

Functional Communication Training is designed based on the Competing Behaviour Model (O’Neill et al., 1997). Once the assessment summary statements have been made, alternative and competing behaviours are defined. The Special Connections website provides an excellent Positive Behaviour Support planning tool using the Competing Behaviour Model.


In the case of FCT this would include the request and reject/protest functions. Based on the function of the challenging behaviour, consider:

1. Teaching an alternative serving the escape function. An appropriate way to communicate a protest. This has been done using sign, picture communication symbols, speech, AAC devices, and/or conventional gestures (e.g., head shake for “no”).

2. Teaching an alternative serving the obtain function. An appropriate way to communicate a request for help, an object, attention or an activity. Again, this can be done using various modes of communication.

3. Teaching the use of augmentative and alternative communication as a replacement behaviour within these natural contexts. Use these situations as powerful teaching moments.

4. Reminding others to honour the use of the alternative behaviour. Communication partners must respond to the student's request or protest or they may revert back to the challenging behaviour because it is more effective and more efficient.

5. Discussing a communication program which uses this model to teach the request and protest functions as an alternative to challenging behaviour with the speech pathologist.

If you do not have access to a picture symbol library, several printable picture cards are available at http://www.do2learn.com/picturecards/printcards/index.htm or http://www.usevisualstrategies.com/pictures.html at no cost. Although this process can appear daunting, it is important to remember that the FA and the corresponding Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) should be developed as a team, with each team member, including families, making a contribution. Understanding the process and where to access information and resources enables teachers, support staff and caregivers to be valuable contributors to effective change.

Resources
• Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice (CECP) http://cecp.air.org/fba/default.asp
**Challenge Behaviours—Assessment & Support of Functional Communication**

**Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (OSEP)**
- [http://www.pbis.org/main.htm](http://www.pbis.org/main.htm)  
  Tary Tobin University of Oregon

- [http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~ttobin/](http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~ttobin/)  
  National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY)

- [http://www.nichcy.org/resources/behavassess.asp](http://www.nichcy.org/resources/behavassess.asp)  
  Special Connections

  Free picture symbols

- [http://www.do2learn.com/](http://www.do2learn.com/)  
  ISAAC

  AGOSCI


**References**


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**Multimodal Approaches to Literacy for Non Readers**

Many students with disabilities do not read and many are non-verbal, so finding activities that motivate, are inclusive and provide opportunities to assess the development of skills is often a challenge for teachers.

To enhance non-readers’ or emergent readers’ access to literacy it is important to consider the relevance and additional benefits of using multi-modal texts in all subject areas. Students with quite diverse skills can be involved in all subject areas, including science and music and play using a range of books and following a theme using adapted or modified support materials and technologies including digital cameras and voice output communication devices.

It is now widely accepted that computers can be used as an empowering tool to help students gain control over their learning (Ryba 1995) and most people agree that computer technology is a huge, and *undeniable benefit*
Multimodal Approaches to Literacy for Non Readers

(Holzberg, 1998) to the special education classroom. Computer technology provides the opportunity for many students with disabilities to learn in a highly motivating and usually highly interactive way. The use of technology can create excellent opportunities for students to work together (Nolan and Ryba 1987) and students in these settings may show increased self-esteem, motivation, develop positive attitudes to learning, gain confidence in their ability, (Male 2003) develop skills for social interaction and more, through the use of computer technology (Ryba, 1995). Most recently this involves the use of and adaptations for use with interactive whiteboards.

Microsoft PowerPoint is a very powerful software program used for visual or multimedia presentations in a slide show format. Able to incorporate text, charts, graphs, sound effects and video, PowerPoint can be used to design visual computerised presentations to make a powerful impression on an audience. The ability to transfer an entire presentation to portable storage (CD or memory stick / USB drive) which can then be presented on a screen to an audience via a computer (laptop and multi-media projector) makes PowerPoint an extremely portable visual aid for use in almost any setting. When presented to a class on a screen larger than the computer these projected images are quite motivating. At Regency Park School we have screens 2m x 2.5m. for class use. Students in special classes, especially those with a physical disability, can be empowered because they can activate a switch to advance the slides (or program) and effectively become independent, or even able to control the whole class in a group situation.

Teachers and students can make presentations to illustrate facts for a specific audience, record activities and events on camera and transfer to PowerPoint with added text, speech and sound, because:

PowerPoint is a multi media tool that reaches students with different learning styles. Students learn visual literacy by communicating in this medium. The program also has the capability of including video and easily links to the Internet. A kinaesthetic learner communicates by doing something, creating something and showing it to someone else. (www.leesummit.k12.mo.us/its/powerpoint.htm )

These are the properties which teachers at this school consider including in all literacy learning situations.

One whole class project was to use PowerPoint to record the students’ research about mushrooms and fungi. When students observed that there were mushrooms growing in the school yard photos were taken daily to record the appearance and development of several patches of mushrooms. To make these photos accessible they were placed onto a PowerPoint set of slides. The students printed the pictures of the slides and arranged them in sequential order. This activity would be possible if set up for use on an interactive whiteboard where the pictures could be dragged to the correct order.

The students borrowed books and CDs from the information resource centre to research the names or kinds and parts of mushrooms. A number of books were borrowed from a local library to supplement these. The students used post-it notes to identify which pages they wanted to copy and these were scanned as a class activity. During this topic the students conducted experiments with the mushrooms and were introduced to varieties of mushrooms (fresh and dried) from the grocer. They prepared and cooked them using recipes they had collected.

This PowerPoint presentation format of the students’ information, scanned pictures and photographic records from observing mushrooms and fungi experiments and information from their research was put together over two terms.
MULTIMODAL APPROACHES TO LITERACY FOR NON READERS

This was a very empowering and a positive activity for the students who are unable to write or draw or read or talk. The students all had the opportunity while supervised to add to the presentation although one student was responsible for much of the work. He typed and added facts which had been documented as part of class research activities. He used a print out of the scanned pictures to help place the slides in order. This presentation had some speech and incorporated the recorded voices of students who utilize communication devices (eg Pathfinder and DynaVox). The completed PowerPoint presentation was shown to other classes using the multi media projector and the big screen. The students were able to use alternative interfaces (eg a modified mouse with a switch or an Apple mouse (to avoid right click errors) or Intellikeys) to activate and advance the program. The Touch Screen is another alternative to using a mouse for students with disabilities.

The project was saved to CD for each student to have their own copy. A printed and bound copy of the PowerPoint, the CD and all of the other materials (eg dried mushrooms, recipes etc) collected during this class activity were placed in a tub and stored in the library as a teacher resource kit. This was a very successful cross curricular project. It has been used by several other classes.

Students with physical disabilities generally have difficulty accessing texts. Books or readers pose problems for students who may have problems when trying to hold, page turn and read. Books from the Sails Series (Heinemann) have been used extensively and successfully. Each double page in the book contains text and an illustration on the left hand side and a more complex illustration on the right 2/3 of the double page. The pages were scanned or photocopied and laminated and reconstructed using a binder making them more resilient for students use. To reduce the distraction of the full page illustration a series of books were made with increasingly more features added. Initially the book was an A4 sized illustration, the next had the simple text added and so on with the pages and illustrations reduced in size until the books were exactly the same as the original.

Some book had Velcro strips added for attaching cards with the matching phrase or words. These same phrase cards could be used as a matching activity to which a miniature picture could also be attached. The scanned illustrations can be used to make bingo and snap cards and used to match to plastic animals and with numerals they can make counting games.
The texts were supplemented with matching overlays for the SuperTalker (a voice output communication device) made using Boardmaker and scanned images. The SuperTalker does not scan but can be used with a switch to speak the recorded messages in sequential order.

One picture overlay could also be used with several different stored messages on different levels of the device eg to match the text *(the cow)*, and with embellished additions like the animal sounds or *the cow says moo* and additional information like *the cow makes milk* or *cow starts with c*.

Small *puffers* were added to assist page turning. These puffers are sticky backed pieces of foam rubber which are added to the page to assist students to grip or by separating the pages making it easier to turn. They can be placed on the back of cards to act as handles. The foam can be purchased at Finch the Rubber Man at Hindmarsh.

Texts and illustrations that match the various levels can be added to PowerPoint which can be accessed independently via a switch for those unable to manage the book. In Clicker the same images can again be used to create activities in a variety of styles. Interactive whiteboards can *speak* the text to help non readers.

Other ideas for non readers include creating talking books. These vary from commercial (eg CDs or DVDs which support a text) to versions made at school. The old Scholastic WiggleWorks series with books, tape and CDs are an excellent interactive literacy program.

Audio tapes with books are useful resources which allow emergent readers to follow the text as they listen. These are also excellent resources when initially establishing *Literacy Kits*.

Whole class activities can be recorded with photos saved in PowerPoint with supporting text and speech. Some ideas include retelling stories with students acting parts or reenacting events or stories or writing scripts and dramatizing events or stories. One class group dressed up and took photos to illustrate the song *Waltzing Matilda* which was compiled as a PowerPoint presentation and finally as a CD. This also is stored in a literacy kit. This was a one term activity.

When this proved useful and successful with the students, other texts were selected to compliment class themes. Recently a class game of Hide and Seek, monitoring the building of a new playground in the school, a play shopping activity and a class theme about the colour blue have been added as photos to PowerPoint with text and sound added for student enjoyment. These activities when personalized to make social stories (eg pictures with text about daily or specific events) are very motivating. They can also be adapted to suit Movie Maker and stored as a DVD which make them easily accessible at home.

Lewis discussed the effectiveness of talking books to improve literacy skills for students with disabilities after a three year research project. Findings indicated that with structured support students with learning disabilities benefited from talking story book programs including Living Books and Disney Animated Series. Without supervision the students were distracted by the graphic *hot spots* and the games, and were *not likely to attend to the reading task or to gain new skills*. This particular medium to engage students with text is also reported by Medwell to be widely used.
in United Kingdom schools and her project also looked at whether talking books could help young children learn to read and how to support children’s reading (unfortunately children identified with specific learning or reading difficulties were excluded from the project). The results suggested that the ideal role for talking books was as an additional reading experience, with time once again reported to impact on the student’s amount of individual contact with a teacher (1:1), with a computer (alone or shared) and with a book. Commercial programs were used and the teacher time required to create talking books was not discussed.

Again simple communication devices such as the SuperTalker can be used to tell / read stories particularly those with limited text. Good examples of books which converted easily to the 8 icon grid using Boardmaker for the images were, Can you keep a secret?, I went walking and What colour are your knickers?.

Lists of words like Peter Clutterbuck’s most frequently used words can be entered onto PowerPoint so students can work independently by finding cards to match to the word on the screen. Boardmaker images can be added for extra clues – one slide is the word and the image is on the second slide as a prompt. Add speech and the options are unlimited. Boardmaker can also be used to create personal readers on everyday topics like My body (my head, my hair, my ears etc). Save these to computer files for later use or book repairs!

The response of the students to literacy in varied forms, their enthusiasm while creating a presentation, and their excitement at seeing their work particularly when they present it independently on the big screen to a school assembly, far outweighs the time costs or commitments required by the teacher to prepare, or complete parts of these projects for the students to use.

Having access to books in adapted formats, utilizing technology to interact with printed text and being exposed to cross curricula literary experiences assist students with diverse skills and abilities and interests to participate in literary activities and to develop positive attitudes to their literacy and learning.
MULTIMODAL APPROACHES TO LITERACY FOR NON READERS

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LITERACY KITS

*Literacy Kits* at Regency Park School (RPS) began from an idea by Ms Jenny Hocking. As an outreach teacher Jenny’s work took her into mainstream schools where she saw props stored with books available to be borrowed as a unit and used to support student learning.

Jenny shared the idea as *Story Time* in a staff meeting with a picture book called *The Brown Felt Hat* (R.Tulloch and C. Smith) and a shabby example of a hat fitting that description. The ideas generated at that staff meeting later became 120 plus *Literacy Kits* The idea of using a prop to support a story was not a new one, however this idea formalised the preparation and storage of resources for easy access and immediate use. The staff took on the cultivation and innovation of the idea to prepare resources for student, family / carer and teacher use across the school and the students homes, for use as tools towards improving student engagement in literacy with associated activities.

Regency Park School won an Early Years Literacy Grant and used the funds to prepare communication symbols and other Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) resources to be included in the kits. Simple kits were developed around familiar books that were on the library’s high frequency borrowing list.

The simplest kit is the *Take Home Pack*, followed by the *Teacher Kit* and finally, the more substantial *Teacher Resource Kit*. Key objects or characters to compliment the story were identified and clear plastic hanging bags were purchased to hold a book, props and/or characters to match the story.

Work sheets related to the story were included; whilst we were aware that there were a limited number of RPS students who could complete a work sheet independently we saw the inclusion of worksheets as relevant to provide an activity for the student’s siblings.
Literacy Kits

Some kits were supported with an auditory version of the story, either a commercial purchase or produced by tape recording a staff member reading the story. Participation of family members, either to read, colour, cut or play with the RPS student who may be holding a toy / hand puppet is the fundamental purpose on which the kits were developed.

The Teacher Kit is specifically designed for teacher use with additional contents housed in the same size hanging bag as the Take Home Pack. The purpose of increasing the quantity of resources in a kit was to cater for more group members to interact with multiple small parts. Contents in the kits were multi sensory allowing for selection and distribution based on individual student’s sensory or cognitive needs for example, Rosie’s Walk (Pat Hutchins); I Know An Old Lady Who Swallowed A Fly (Pam Adams).

The Teacher Resource Kit is a collation of resources for a specific theme, and are housed in clear plastic tubs with lids. A number of kits include multiple fact or fictitious books for different age levels around the same theme as well as a list of other books available in the school to support the topic. The kit may hold examples of completed work a class has done around the topic or blank worksheets. The kits are readily available for use should a topic arise incidentally. For example staff and students on a school yard walk who may find toadstools or mushrooms are able to generate discussion with the support of an existing kit for a single lesson. On the other hand a class may be exploring the theme of dental hygiene for a term and there is a kit available for their use for that period of time. Teacher Resource Kits have also proven to be a TRT’s delight with a day’s activities just waiting to be explored.

Regency Park School is a communication focus school; Teacher Resource Kits have a strong communication teaching component with curriculum links. The inclusion of laminated Board Maker symbols, each with a velcro tab enable easy storage in a manila folder and easy access for transferring to a display board in a teaching setting.

Literacy Kits promote discussion, role play, multi sensory and multimodal opportunities for topic exploration, student engagement and learning. The kits are interactive, tangible and meaningful especially when students are offered the opportunity to immerse themselves in what the kit offers.

An inexpensive way to start out on the Literacy Kit journey is to use current library resources (book and tape kits), or buy books that come with the C.D. or audio tape. Examples of such stories would be The Rainbow Fish by Marcus Pfister or any book in the Bob The Builder series.

It is also recommended that if making a character specific kit you must have the character as the toy. It is not recommended that you have a generic toy for stories such as these. The toy must be the same as the one mentioned in the story. For example a book such as 5 Little Ducks by Wendy Straw is not character specific and it’s kit will lend itself to the inclusion of a variety of ducks.

Kits are never complete, but rather they evolve with each contribution a person makes or takes! It is a good idea to keep a file with master copies of work sheets and tape a laminated photograph of the Teacher Resource Kit contents to the side of the tub as a record of contents as well as assisting with kit identification when seeking one off of the shelf.
**Literacy Kits**

Encourage students to borrow the kits during library lessons especially if there is one to support the current class theme.

**What else can be included in a kit?**

Other resources that can be included in a kit:
- Power point displays made with a group of students.
- A scanned illustration from a book can be printed in duplicate and laminated. One sheet is left whole as a base whilst the second is cut into pieces for a puzzle for students to reassemble. Adhesive back magnets are also useful to enable the use of a magnetic display board with the puzzle.
- Packs of seeds, miniature gardening tools, gardening gloves are all real life object that may become part of a kit with that theme.

*Have fun making the kits because that will allow you to compile kits that you and others will enjoy using.*

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**South Australian School for Vision Impaired Short Courses**

South Australian School for Vision Impaired (SASVI) is a special school for students with severe vision impairments at Parkholme; a shared site with Kilparrin and Ascot Park PS. The school is one component of a complex and diverse Service that includes two secondary vision impairment resource programs, one at Charles Campbell Secondary School, to accommodate students from the northern suburbs and the other at Seaview High School, for those living in the southern areas. Students attending SASVI, the school and the secondary vision support programs, must have ophthalmological reports and be legally blind i.e. a visual acuity of 6/60 or less in the better eye, after correction, and/or have a severe field restriction.

**The Statewide Support Service**

SASVI also comprises a statewide support service of qualified and experienced teachers of the vision impaired. The support teachers are based at SASVI but support students from pre-school to Year 13 at Department of Education and Children's Service (DECS) sites, Catholic Education and Independent Schools and Colleges throughout metropolitan Adelaide and country South Australia. The visiting teachers observe, assess and monitor VI students’ functional vision in the educational setting, provide ongoing professional development that includes information about students’ specific eye conditions and the impact on their learning and access to the curriculum. They provide advice on teaching resources and adaptive technology, other equipment for independent living, the internal and external school environment, low vision devices and the expanded core curriculum (Braille, Orientation & Mobility, Independent Living Skills, Social Skills, Self Advocacy, Adaptive Technology and Low Vision Devices).

DECS provides a historical 6.1 support teacher level of staffing to the statewide support component of the service. In recent years the number of students with severe vision impairments attending DECS and Catholic/Independent mainstream sites has risen, probably in line with a worldwide shift towards increased inclusion. Individual sites have the flexibility in South Australia to apply for funding to support students that are legally blind, for example DECS sites can access a High Sustained level of support to employ School Services Officers (SSOs), purchase resources and so on. The need for SASVI support has
continued to increase however as an increased number of mainstream staff requires ongoing advice and guidance and as more students need functional vision assessments and support to develop specific skills and to follow appropriate programs.

To add to the complexity, SASVI Support Service is supporting a number of young blind children in remote country areas at present. The learning of Braille takes about three years. Various members of staff working with that student at the school also need to learn Braille, to learn to make tactile pictures and diagrams, to understand and use the adaptive technology, to develop appropriate programs that ensure full access to the curriculum and to develop skills to implement the expanded core curriculum. The present budget allows for two country visits a term. In an attempt to provide better equity to these country students and to provide continued high quality support to our increased number of mainstream Vision Impaired (VI) students SASVI staff has looked at various options and incentives.

In January 2007 eighteen members of staff attended a South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment (SPEVI) conference in Fremantle, Western Australia. The Leadership team was particularly interested in a presentation by Blind & Low Vision Network of New Zealand (BLENNZ). BLENNZ supports the education of mainstream students with vision impairments on both New Zealand’s north and south islands. They have a special school in Auckland and secondary resource units for VI students. At the SPEVI Presentation a group of their staff discussed similar issues to ours – concerns regarding the provision of an equitable service to rural areas and difficulties related to the management and development of adaptive technology. Furthermore the Service had looked at some interesting initiatives along similar lines to our discussions. There were many similarities between our two Services and their Principal visited SASVI immediately following the SPEVI conference. An ongoing dialogue between the two services developed culminating in SASVI Leadership team and Lucy Szyndler, the DECS Verification Officer for VI, visiting Homai College, the Auckland special school, for 5 days in October 2007. Our main area of interest was to research the BLENNZ immersion courses and to investigate their distance learning technology. The courses were providing opportunities for intensive programs in the expanded core curriculum. BLENNZ had received funding to appoint a full time co-ordinator to be manager of the immersion courses and to cover accommodation and transport costs. We were very excited by what we saw and could see huge potential for a similar incentive in South Australia.

As part of SASVI’s planning process the leadership team, support teachers and students identified learning needs in country and metropolitan schools and it was decided to focus on BrailleNote and Advanced BrailleNote training (a Braille computer that is being introduced to our blind students), PE, Adaptive Technologies, Music (Braille & for low vision), Mathematics (specialized equipment and curriculum modifications) and Transition. Support teachers and SASVI teachers will identify and nominate students who would gain from participating in subsequent courses. As part of SASVI’s planning process the leadership team, support teachers and students identified learning needs in country and metropolitan schools and it was decided to focus on BrailleNote and Advanced BrailleNote training (a Braille computer that is being introduced to our blind students), PE, Adaptive Technologies, Music (Braille & for low vision), Mathematics (specialized equipment and curriculum modifications) and Transition. Support teachers and SASVI teachers will identify and nominate students who would gain from participating in subsequent courses.

In Term 2 Ramona Mandy, a totally blind IT specialist from Humanware, presented the Advanced BrailleNote Course and in Term 3 members of the Blind Sporting Council ran the morning PE session. Every attempt is made to support the school and family to make links in the local community and we bring in allied agencies who also work with...
with the students. SASVI teachers, support teachers and other experts in the field provide intensive instruction during the short courses.

This year SASVI has covered the costs of running each short course. The costs include travel costs to and from SASVI, accommodation, catering, employing experts to assist in the delivery of the course and paying TRT costs to cover teachers. The model for our courses has been adapted to meet our particular needs. There were a number of issues that needed resolution before we could begin. Homai College in New Zealand is a residential school and so accommodation and catering was not much of an issue. SASVI leadership team needed to find affordable and convenient accommodation for students, parents and the mainstream staff accompanying them. A number of the students, mainstream staff and parents were flown in to Adelaide in terms 2 & 3. SASVI paid for accommodation at Warradale Urban Camp which fortunately, is only 5 minutes away from school. The catering is organized, bought, prepared and cooked by SASVI staff. Our staff has been transporting the group between venues in the school bus, for example. backwards and forwards to the camp, parents’ visit to the Royal Society for the Blind and so on.

The most expensive aspect of the program is TRT release for both country schools and SASVI staff. It was important to us that the model for our short courses did not fail because individual sites could not afford to release members of staff to accompany the student. We were able to rationalize this as long term, it may mean a reduction in travel and accommodation costs for the Statewide Support Service.

Another difficulty to overcome was the provision of two classroom spaces for the BrailleNote course (beginners and advanced groups). By rearranging groups and classes within the school, we found two adjacent work spaces, enabling staff and students to move easily between them.

The feedback from students, staff and parents following the first two short courses was extremely positive. The outcomes for the BrailleNote Course include:
- development of mainstream and SASVI staff’s BrailleNote skills
- confidence to continue to work with individual students back in the classroom
- development of students’ skills
- students mentoring one other
- students making new connections and developing friendships with peers that are vision impaired
- being taught by skilful and successful blind facilitators gives students a sense of empowerment and hope for the future
- further development of social and independence skills
- opportunities for parents and staff to discuss vision impairments, access to the curriculum, modifications, adaptive technology etc.
- opportunities for parents to make new connections and to develop a parent network.

In addition, the PE Course outcomes include:
- opportunities for students to try new activities and learn new skills
- ideas for modifying mainstream PE activities
- information about the community sport available in the students’ districts/towns
- information about the support that is available from other agencies to facilitate access to sporting initiatives.

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Many secondary schools are looking at flexible ways of providing special education and learning support for students with disabilities and learning difficulties. This is a summary of an interactive session, looking at the role of learning support centres (LSC’s) in high schools. (these are also referred to as tutorial rooms or study centres). A majority of the participants had a LSC in their schools.

The LSC can provide benefits for schools, staff and students. These benefits include: contributing adaptable learning options, facilitating Negotiated Education Plan accommodations and strategies, adhering to the Disability Discrimination Act, supporting individualised curricula, effectively using funding and staff resources, promoting student self-management and motivation for learning, and supporting behavioural strategies.

The purpose of the LSC is to improve learning outcomes. The participants made it clear that LSCs don’t work for all students with learning needs because some students prefer and need in-class support, some students won’t go to a LSC because of its’ possible stigma and some students simply refuse support. In one sense, this affirms LSCs as one valuable tool within a school’s learning support structure and this returned us to the wider issue of how to structure supports within high schools.

Interestingly, many universities and TAFEs operate learning support faculties or units and these appear to offer a range of short-term courses in areas such as study skills, use of the internet, grammar usage etc. The idea of schools offering short courses was not embraced by participants but the provision of, for example, a one-term intensive literacy programme, was acknowledged. This could form part of the LSCs role (or be provided separately).

A range of approaches were discussed, from a student-centred and directed model through to a more structured and timetabled model. In a student-centred approach, students negotiate their learning with teachers and SSOs and operate within an inclusive nothing about me without me environment. They attend the LSC at agreed times and when necessary. This model provides flexibility; students take increasing responsibility for their own learning and students are able to negotiate time in the LSC. The LSC supports NEP strategies and accommodations. Students could go to the LSC rather than attend lessons that present a high risk (possibly because of a clash with a teacher). Within a whole school commitment, the LSC would be used seamlessly in curriculum and programming.

At the other end of the spectrum, students are directed to the LSC through a structured timetabled model. The participants described their LSCs at various points of this (simple) continuum and described how some students were able to direct their own learning well whereas others needed direction from staff.

This led to the exploration of educational principles related to students with disabilities particularly in terms of quality of life. It was questioned whether self-determination was the ultimate goal for educators of students with disabilities and if so, how it contributed to the design of learning support structures within high schools?

There was discussion around which groups of students should be targeted for the LSC. Participants shared information which shows that most LSCs run separately to the learning support rooms for indigenous and English as a Second Language (ESL) students. Students with disabilities and learning difficulties are the main target groups but it was acknowledged that it is preferable for the LSC to attract students from across a range of abilities to prevent the room becoming unappealing because of the possible stigma within the student community. One school provided student clubs at lunchtime in their LSC while others offered support for South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) students (good role models for year 8s).
It was agreed that LSCs should, wherever possible, include a range of learners across age and ability levels, involve compatible groups of students and target manageable numbers.

Funding is a whole of school commitment, and must cover staffing, facilities, computers, curriculum materials and operating costs. The obvious funding sources are disability (tier 2) and learning difficulties funding (assuming that they are the targeted students). Most participants did not use ESL and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) funding and felt that these funds tended to be quarantined. Most participants did not think applying for a start-up grant for a new LSC was a possibility.

Staffing ideally provides a full time teacher and School Services Officer (SSO) as a minimum. The LSC could be managed by Special Education staff or by a manager/teacher/coordinator. In some models, teachers nominate certain lessons when they will provide support, while other models have one designated teacher. Other options include using skilled teachers for specific interests, using older students as peer supports or possibly utilising parent volunteers.

There may be a trade-off between staffing a LSC and SSO staffing in classrooms. Some schools convert large amounts of tier 2 teacher salary to provide intensive SSO support in classrooms. The LSC will require a full-time teacher so this may reduce SSO provision. The point here however is that the LSC is only one part of a learning support structure that may also continue to offer support in classrooms. The needs of students will drive these decisions. The staffing is a local school decision.

A successful LSC will be an attractive and appealing place with a welcoming air and a work ethos. Resources that encourage self-learning, such as computers and books on CD are essential. A bank of professional-looking alternative curriculum materials will ensure that teachers do not have to re-invent the wheel each time a student needs modified materials. These could be produced (and funded) jointly by LSC staff and faculties. Students will also need access to regular textbooks and learning materials, literacy and numeracy aids and stationery for those students who never seem to have any. The computers should provide supportive programs for spelling, predictive text, grammar etc.

The LSC could be multi-functional. Clubs could use the space, as mentioned, or it could be recess, lunch, after-school activity centre. It could provide a safe haven for year 8s, a homework centre, computer resource room or short course room. The SRC could hold their meetings in the LSC as validation of a student space.

There are difficulties or issues that may arise. Staff across the school should respect and value the LSC and contribute towards its' success. Students also may stigmatise the LSC if it does not provide a respectful and valued service. If students negotiate with teachers to use the LSC, there may be times when a student will need to learn how to do this appropriately. Similarly a teacher may need to learn new ways of interacting and negotiating with students. However the main issue is to ensure that the LSC is effective – that it is being used optimally, that there are quantifiable improvements in learning (and behavioural) outcomes and that it supports the needs of the student population.

If the LSC is viewed as a whole of school resource and is used seamlessly in curriculum delivery with a range of students, then the LSC simply becomes a regular feature of high schools and therefore inclusive. However the effectiveness of the LSC as a learning support strategy requires further investigation - and discussions between high schools may reveal strategies and systems that assist schools to use LSCs more productively. No research data on the use of LSCs was located.
Most participants said that their school operates a LSC but it is unclear whether schools have measured its’ success. If schools have collected information/data on the effectiveness of LSCs, please contact Tom Clarke.

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ASSISTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES INTO EMPLOYMENT

This article summaries three presentations by services that assist students with disabilities to gain employment.

WHAT DOES GOOD PRACTICE LOOK LIKE FOR A TRANSITION PROGRAM?

Daws Road and Prospect Transition Centres have been operating for a number of years. The transition programs developed and offered through these two centres are underpinned by the following set of core principles.

Clear, consistent and high expectations for students  
Students need to understand the purpose of a transition program and what is required from them. To be successful in the workplace, students need to be able to demonstrate the skills required by employers. The required skills expected by employers can be reinforced by a code of behaviour or a rating sheet at the end of the day that gives the students the opportunity to reflect on the development of their skills.

Effective communication with key stakeholders to ensure successful relationships  
Effective communication with stakeholders occurs through well organised meetings, comprehensive newsletters, informative websites, honest reports and parent expos. It is essential that the stakeholders work well with each other so there is no confusion about what is happening in the transition process.

Meeting employers’ expectations will promote student success in employment  
Generally, employers expect their staff to demonstrate an ability to: learn, communicate, solve problems, work in teams, plan, organise, be able to use technology and to show initiative. Where a transition program aims to incorporate these skills, students will be well prepared for employment.

Teachers, families and students need to have a good understanding of the new world of work  
The world of work is rapidly changing. Students may work part-time and attend school part-time. They will have many different jobs during their lifetime. Jobs will be more likely to be contract rather than permanent and employees are wanting a better work/life balance.

Maximise available funding  
It's important to know where funding is available and then to ensure your centre is included in funding allocations. Do this by talking to your Transition Broker. VET in Schools (Futures Connect) funding is managed by the department Transition Brokers. Other Futures Connect funding available is paid directly to schools from central office.

Support from the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) is essential throughout the transition process.  
A Memorandum of Understanding and the Vet in School Agreement (VISA) Schedule held either by TAFESA or other Registered Training Organisations. This documentation describes: the responsibilities of the school and the RTO, the units of competencies to be delivered and assessed, the contact details of the parties to the VISA schedule, and the quality assurance requirements, including facilities, resources and personnel qualifications and experience.
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This detail is mandatory and must meet the designated time lines set by the RTO. Personnel from these organisations are there to assist in any VET curriculum. They are willing to visit your setting and advise staff about the requirements of courses.

Choose meaningful and appropriate curriculum with a practical component which is enhanced by explicit teaching. Students with disabilities often require additional time and flexible methodology to assist with their understanding of the course content. Where there is an opportunity to demonstrate practically, the student will find the learning outcomes easier. Teachers are sometimes required to be creative and in fact teach the same concept in many different ways before a student can be competent.

Students need to spend significant time in the workplace

School VET programs are a very effective way of students testing their career options; this is particularly the case when the length of time and variety of experiences in the workplace increases. (Smith and Green cited in National Centre For Vocational Educational Research 2007).

Assessment needs to be flexible even though students must reach the standard prescribed by the RTO. Students need to be provided with a number of opportunities, using a range of assessment strategies to display competencies in each criteria. These opportunities may occur in the classroom or in the workplace.

Teachers need to keep comprehensive records on student work performance. Evidence can be recorded through log books, folders, daily student records, photos, diary and work experience reports. The more comprehensive the evidence is, the easier the auditing process will be.

Celebrating Success

There are many opportunities to formally recognise the successes of the students. A well set out resume with any evidence of work experience is the basis of a good portfolio. Any certificates for independent travel or serving at special functions should also be included. Any special courses undertaken needs to be mentioned. Graduations at the end of the year can reward students with well deserved recognition.

Students achieve a post school option

A successful end of the transition journey should result in a post school option of open employment, Business Service, Further Education & Training or day options. It is important to start the transition to the option six months ahead, so the two services overlap. This may include one or two days in the term before the student is planning to leave school to help the student adjust to the new setting. The Disability Employment Network Services and Business Services can work with students during this phase to make the process seamless.

Destination data

Collecting destination data is important. Consider tracking all students after they leave school for a two year period. That way any problems can be identified and agencies can work with school personnel to help solve them. Agencies are generally very cooperative in discussing the progress of ex-students.

References


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WHAT PLANNING TOOLS ARE AVAILABLE TO SCHOOL PERSONNEL?

Transition planning, in relation to schooling, is an important aspect of a young persons’ education. It is a personal record of the process through which a young person moves from one achievement to another. Transition planning records set goals as well as achievements.

There are a number of ways in which the department requires a young person to record their transitions throughout schooling. These include the:

- Negotiated Education Plan
- Futures Connect Transition Plan,
- future SACE Personal Learning Plan (PLP),
- ATSI (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Plan,
- Individual Learning Plan (for students who come under the Guardianship of the Minister (GOM)) and
- site-specific individually devised plans.

The Transition Plan is a department plan that all year 8 students are expected to have started. It is a working document that should be embedded across all learning areas. The PLP is an accredited plan towards the completion of the future South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE). This is a requirement for the completion of the future (SACE). It is mandated that all young people who identify as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander have an ASTI plan. Individual Learning Plans that are site specific would be developed for those young people who are detained, who attend a learning centre for any length of time, or who attend an alternative program.

Although in its infancy, some sites are combining the development of the PLP with the Transition Plan - schools and young people are building upon their Transition Plans in order to inform their PLP. This is still in the trial stage.

Each young person, through their transition plan, identifies strengths and weaknesses, sets goals, and identifies individual learning styles and learning pathways. They determine personal networks and collect and collate personal information that they can use for specific purposes – for example, to inform an application for a particular job. Their transition planning tool should have this information. The plan holds extensive personal information the young person would like to record for future use.

The transition plan evolves, with relevant information added and deleted as the young person moves through different stages of schooling. Each young person is able to customise their plan to best reflect their personality and learning style. The Transition Plan is one aspect of a young persons’ transition portfolio.

Learning Profiles, support networks, certificates of attainment, records of achievement, various reports, prized photos, resume, transition planning checklist and other relevant information all could and should be included in a transition portfolio.

increase each young person’s level of independence, personal control and empowerment, and has the ability to reasonably sustain this empowerment… Some young people need support with transitions because of the large number of transitions that young people have to make and the crucial nature of these transitions and their potential to influence a young person’s future… Promoting successful transitions can include supporting young people (and their families) so they have skills and knowledge to make each transition successful.
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It can also include ensuring that a young person can make a transition from school without losing access to services and resources as well as providing young people with information about pathway options. (DECS).

References

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HOW CAN THE DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT NETWORK SERVICE (DENS) ASSIST STUDENTS INTO EMPLOYMENT

The Disability Employment Network (DEN) provides specialist assistance to job seekers with disabilities who require on-going support to find and maintain employment. The DEN Service is delivered by a network of organisations around Australia.

A person can be referred to DEN if they:
- have a permanent (or likely to be permanent) disability
- have a reduced capacity for communication, learning or mobility
- require support for more than six months after placement in employment
- are a student and are in their last six months of school

In addition to these criteria, a job seeker will be referred to a DEN Service if they require specialist assistance to build capacity in order to share the financial, social and personal benefits that employment offers.

DEN open employment services assist job seekers to gain and maintain employment in the mainstream labour market or to become self-employed. They provide training, job placement and on-the-job support. Each year open employment services helps more than 50,000 people with moderate to severe disabilities find and keep work.

Assistance for Employers

Disabled Australian Apprentice Wage Support (DAAWS)
The Disabled Australian Apprentice Wage Support (DAAWS) Program provides funding for employers and training providers to assist apprentices and trainees with disabilities to successfully participate in on-the-job and off-the-job training. Apprentices and trainees with a disability can access training support such as tutoring, note taking or sign language interpreting services. The Disability Employment Network can assist employers who are considering employing a trainee or an apprentice with a disability.

Supported Wage System (SWS)
Most Australians who have a disability participate in the workforce at full award rates of pay. However, there are some people who are unable to obtain and/or maintain employment at full award rates, due to the effects of a disability on their workplace productivity. In this instance, the Supported Wage System (SWS) can be utilised. The SWS provides a productivity-based wage assessment to determine pro-rata award wages. The assessed percentage of productivity applies to the wage rate only. All conditions of employment are the same as their co-workers.

Wage Subsidies
The Wage Subsidy Scheme encourages employers to provide job opportunities to people with disabilities and offers wage subsidies for employment that has the possibility of continuing beyond 13 weeks and where the employer meets strict conditions. Wage Subsidies are funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.
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Workplace Modifications
Funding of up to $5000 is available for essential workplace modifications or special or adaptive equipment that will assist people with disabilities to get jobs. The Workplace Modification Scheme is also funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. More information on the Workplace Modifications Scheme can be obtained by contacting a DEN consultant.

References

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and the Business Council of Australia.

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TECHBITSECHBITS

The Crick software company has recently released a new writing tool on to the Australian market. As the title implies, it is a word processor that allows a student to write online. There are many Web 2.0 tools, but this highly innovative tool sets a new benchmark. Like its other innovative tool Clicker 5, the Crick Company continues to go to great lengths to ensure this new tool is consistent with their philosophy of student personalisation and inclusion.

WriteOnLine is a Java based online word processor. The immediate advantage of this is that students can log in to using the program from any computer with an Internet connection. It will therefore operate on any operating system (Windows, Mac or Linux). WriteOnLine contains a number of features to support students with the writing process. It has a high quality text to speech engine (similar to that of Clicker 5), predictive text and on screen grids of vocabulary and phrases. Files are saved online so students can also log in from home to access and work on their files with the program.

Text to Speech
All the features of the program are supported with text to speech. WriteOnline will read out complete sentences highlighting each word as it is read out aloud. It will also read out individual words in a document, in the word prediction list or in the onscreen word banks. The speech engine is streamed through the Internet connection.

Predictive Text
WriteOnLine has a new word prediction tool called Wordflow. Wordflow was specially developed for WriteOnLine. Its development involved collating large passages of text. Some 1,000,000 words were analysed to see which words typically follow other words. As it predicts ahead to the next word it also monitors the frequency a particular word is used by the student. The more frequently it is used by the student, the higher up in the list of predicted words it will appear. The predictive text feature can be quickly personalized to various levels of sophistication to ensure it matches the vocabulary needs of an individual student.

Wordbars
Students can choose to open onscreen word banks. These are called Wordbars and there are hundreds of ready made Wordbars students can access on line. They can be in the form of A-Z vocabulary on particular subjects or topics. They can also be in the form of a writing frame where students can access headings and phrases which can prompt them with the structural aspects of their writing task. The words or phrases in a Wordbar can also contain audio files. This feature allows for a greater level of scaffolding. Teachers can also create their own Wordbars.

Online Collaboration
Web 2.0 tools allow a new way of collaboration between teachers and students.
The developers of WriteOnLine have included a number of tools to support the reviewing of students’ work. A teacher can log in and add comments to the document. The student can hover the mouse over the word to display the comment. It is also planned to add text to speech support so that the student can listen to the comments. Multiple comments can be made on words or sections of text.

Teachers can write notes about the piece of work as a whole. Pupils can also write notes to the teacher. In the near future, a new development will allow for collaborative input by peers. All students will therefore be able to leave notes to each other in the Pupil Notes section.

Document Analysis
The teacher can use the Document Analysis tool to evaluate a document. There are four analysis tools.

The Statistics feature provides a summary of information about the complexity of the text. Both the teacher and the student can see this tab.

The History feature provides a detailed picture outlining the productivity of the student. Even though the student had a document open for 55 minutes, WriteOnLine has recorded that only 8 minutes was spent working on the document.

The Spelling Corrections feature keeps a record of every word that was corrected with the spellchecker. WriteOnLine also keeps a record of the phrase in which this word was used. This gives teachers important contextual information when analysing the listing of misspelt words.

The Pasted Text feature shows a listing of items pasted in to the document from another source. The complete detail of the pasted entries is also shown. Teachers will be able to investigate further where this pasted text came from to ascertain if it is an appropriate use of quotation.

In a future update, the ability to print the analysis will be available.

Conclusion
This innovative tool has an extensive range of support tools built in to the program which are suitable for all students from middle primary to secondary. The program will soon have switch accessibility for students with physical impairment and this will bring the program to a new standard of Universal Design. Its online collaborative features provide educators with a tool that students will view as a highly relevant Web 2.0 application.

One of its main benefits is that schools do not need to install software and manage upgrades. Any new updates are immediately available to the user the next time they log in.

For more information visit http://www.cricksoft.com/uk/writeonline/.

Department schools wishing to further explore WriteOnLine can access the program on a trial basis from the Special Education Resource Unit (SERU).

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NEW RESOURCES

This book provides information and practical ideas for educators working towards developing learners’ capabilities to be reflective and metacognitive in a range of environments. Some of the areas for reflection covered are: abilities, actions, behaviours, consequences, feelings, observations, personal needs, perspectives, prior knowledge, strategies, work habits. Some aspects of metacognition discussed are: reviewing and clarifying thinking and learning, reasoning and critically analysing thoughts and information, monitoring changes in thinking, exploring relationships and perspectives.

This book provides movement experiences for learners aged 3 to 12 that can enhance listening skills; develop spatial and body awareness; coordination; and fitness, as well as foster cooperation at the developmentally appropriate age level.

I Spy Bingo, Briarpatch 63-3190-01.
This I Spy Bingo game, suitable for learners aged four and up, has two levels of play. It is designed to assist players to learn beginning sounds, practice reading skills and develop verbal and visual skills.

The books in the Achieve series have been designed and written for secondary learners who have low-level literacy skills and require modified classroom activities to fully participate in curriculum. The materials are most suitable for students who have a reading comprehension age of six to nine years and include blackline masters.

This book is designed to provide parents with an explanation of the many causes of problems in learning. It contains practical advice for assisting learners with reading, writing and mathematics at home and at school. While the focus is on learners with general learning difficulties, the book also provides information about teaching and managing learners with intellectual, physical and sensory disabilities, as well as autism.

This book contains a range of strategies designed to assist individual learners to improve their self-concept and increase their achievement levels at school. Contents include the characteristics of underachievers, building self esteem, improving study skills and motivation.

Safari Hide and Seek. 85-0655-01.
This is a mind challenging game suitable for ages 7 and over. The challenge with this game is to arrange the four puzzle pieces on the game board so that only the animals that are shown on the challenge chosen are visible on the board. All the others should be hidden. The game includes a challenge book with 48 different challenges ranging from easy to difficult.

Success at Last! Helping Students with AD(h)d Achieve Their Potential, Weaver, C, 1994. 18-0181-01.
This book focuses on supporting learners with Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorders to become involved, active and successful at learning. The book includes articles by and discussions among young adults with ADHD who describe their own related difficulties in school and explain some ways that educators and parents can alleviate or circumvent such difficulties. Other articles include case studies of successful learners with ADHD.
**NEW RESOURCES**


There are many different adventures routes through these puzzle books. The reader makes way through mazes and puzzles choosing which path to follow on each page.

**Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder in the Classroom, Dowdy, CA, et al, 1998. 18-0178-01.**

This book provides educators with a complete guide on how to deal effectively with learners with attention deficits in their classrooms. The book emphasizes practical applications for teachers to use to facilitate the success of students, both academically and social in a school setting. Contents include: Overview of ADHD; Assessing ADHD for Classroom Purposes; Managing the Classroom Environment; Accommodating Instructional Needs; Developing Student-Regulated Strategies; Understanding the Use of Medication; Success through Collaboration; The Transition to Adult Living.

**Preschool/Kindergarten Visual Activity Schedule Pack 2. 61-0889-02.**

This set of Boardmaker picture squares depict a variety of common activities and routines that occur in preschools and kindergartens. They are designed to be used with learners requiring visual strategies to support their learning.

**Critical Literacy in the Primary Classroom, Simon, Elizabeth, 1997. 36-0260-01.**

In this book, the author demonstrates how to introduce six to ten year olds to critical thinking by looking at well known stories. The stories used are: The Three Billy Goats Gruff, Jack and the Beanstalk, Sleeping Beauty, The Paper Bag Princess, A Birthday from Frances and Willy the Wimp. The book illustrates how to develop critical literacy skills with whole class and individual activities with supporting blackline masters.

**Understanding and Supporting Children with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, Cooper, P, 2000. 24-0149-01.**

This British book provides psychological and psychiatric assessment, treatment strategies and a framework for working with learners who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Contents include: Understanding Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties; The Assessment of Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties; Supporting Children with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.

**Steps to Independence, Baker, B, 2005. 34-0371-01.**

This book provides strategies for teaching life skills to children from 3 years through to young adulthood. An overview of teaching methods and a step-by-step guide is provided for teaching seven types of skills: get-ready, self-help, toilet training, play, self-care, home care, functional academic.

**Online Self-paced Learning Program**

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The SMART Program is an evolving intervention targeting South Australian staff whose role is critical in responding to children who have experienced abuse related trauma. The program is step-by-step, containing a range of resources and other educational modules. The program is offered online and allows staff to work at their own pace.

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This program is accessible at www.childhood.org.au/smart/learn-new.asp