**Complex Needs - New Challenges and Responses**

**Introduction**

The fourth edition of the SERUpdate in 2012 featured an overview of the National Partnerships More Support for Students with Disabilities Strategy (MSSWDS). Ingrid Alderton, Manager of the MSSWDS, provided information on the Professional Learning Program highlighting that participating schools would have the opportunity to work with Professor Barry Carpenter OBE.

Professor Barry Carpenter OBE is Honorary Professor at the University of Worcester, Limerick and Hamburg, and Flinders University (South Australia). He is also a Fellow of the University of Oxford and he holds the International Chair in Special and Inclusive Education.

A large focus of his work, and that of his colleagues, is on the pedagogy of Engagement around children with Complex Needs. Barry Carpenter and his colleagues prepared an article for the Special Education Moodle (http://dlb.sa.edu.au/specedmoodle/) on this topic, and on Barry’s suggestion, it has been printed in this edition of SERUpdate.

SERU has collated articles from educators in DECD schools which describe the range of strategies, general school or specific intervention programs and initiatives they are utilising. We hope these articles will provide educators with new ideas and approaches to engaging children and young people with complex learning difficulties and disabilities in learning.

Dymphna James
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**ENGAGING CHILDREN WITH COMPLEX LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND DISABILITIES IN THE CLASSROOM**

Barry Carpenter (former Director, DfE CLDD Project), Beverley Cockbill (Training Officer< SSAT -UK), Debbie Wiggett (Class Teacher, Colmore Farm Junior School) and Jo Egerton (Research Project Co-ordinator,SSAT-UK)

Children and young people with complex learning difficulties and disabilities (CLDD) have been described as a 21st century frontier for education. During an eighteen-month, Department for Education-supported project in the UK, The Schools Network, (now SSAT-UK), researched ways to improve outcomes for children and young people with the most complex educational needs and disabilities through the development of evidence-based teaching and learning strategies.

These children present considerable challenges to School Leaders. They are a group that has emerged rapidly in the first decade of this 21st Century, largely due to modern medical progress, (eg children born very low birth weight, due to extreme prematurity,) but there are also Societal factors that are presenting which are a cause for concern in the UK and Australia, (eg Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.) Both of these groups of children, and others falling into this descriptive framework, may require pedagogy beyond the experience of most Principals. Indeed the resolutions to some of their educational needs may have to be resolved through inquiry based approaches on a child by child basis.

**Who are the children with complex learning difficulties and disabilities?**

Children and young people with complex learning difficulties and disabilities (CLDD) include those with co-existing conditions (e.g. autism and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)) or profound and multiple learning disabilities. However, they also include children who have newly begun to populate our schools – among them those who have difficulties arising from premature birth, have survived infancy due to advanced medical interventions, have disabilities arising from parental substance and alcohol abuse, and/or have rare chromosomal disorders. Many may also be affected by compounding factors such as multisensory impairment or mental ill-health, or require invasive procedures, such as supported nutrition, assisted ventilation and rescue medication.

These children challenge skilled professionals; they do not fit our current range of learning environments, curriculum models or teaching and learning approaches (Department of Education, 2011). Porter and Ashdown (2002) describe them as:

...a wide and varied group of learners... including pupils who do not simply require a differentiated curriculum or teaching at a slower pace but who, at times, require further adaptations to teaching if they are to make progress.

A wide ranging debate with CLDD project steering board and advisors and stakeholder groups including learning disability charities, resulted in the development of the following definition:

*Children and young people with Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (CLDD) have conditions that co-exist. These conditions overlap and interlock creating a complex profile. The co-occurring and compounding nature of complex learning difficulties requires a personalised learning pathway that recognises children and young people’s unique and changing learning patterns. Children and young people with CLDD present with a range of issues and combination of layered needs – e.g. mental health, relationships, behavioural, physical, medical, sensory, communication and cognitive. They need informed specific support and strategies which may include transdisciplinary input to engage effectively in the learning process and to participate actively in classroom activities and the wider community. Their attainments may be inconsistent, presenting an atypical or uneven profile. In the school setting, learners may be working at any educational level, including the National Curriculum and P scales. This definition could also be applicable to learners in Early Years and post-school settings. (Carpenter et al., 2011)*

The increasing number of children and young people with CLDD in schools has been noted by researchers and educators. The Department for Education’s 2010 figures show that students with special educational needs in England increased from around 1.53 million (19% of students) in 2006 to approximately 1.69 million (21% of students) in 2010. Children with most severe needs represent about 3% of students in England (Hartley, 2010). The numbers of children with severe and complex needs in one local authority more than doubled between 1981 and 2001 (Emerson and Hatton, 2004). Between 2004 and 2009, the total number of children with severe learning disabilities (SLD) increased by 5.1%, and the total number of those with Profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) rose by an average of 29.7% (National Statistics, 2004, 2009). Emerson (2009) estimates that the prevalence of PMLD in the older child/young adult age range is increasing by 4–5% annually. In 2005, McClusky and McNamara reported that Government figures indicated that of the 700,000 disabled children in Great Britain, ‘there are more than 100,000 severely disabled children in the UK and their numbers are known to be rising as a result of medical advances’ (McCluskey and McNamara, 2005). Wolke (2011) attributes some of this rise to an increase in the survival rates of extremely and very preterm babies.

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In the USA, 80% of all babies born at 26 weeks (i.e. ‘extremely preterm’) survive, and 96% of those born between 28 and 31 weeks (i.e. ‘very preterm’) (National Center for Health Statistics, 2008).

CLDD in schools
The increase in children with CLDD is beginning to impact in schools. One headteacher writes:

…we are seeing a regular increase in pupils with profound difficulties, some with complex needs, many with ASD, some with genetic conditions and some as the result of acute infections and diseases (eg cytomegalovirus, leukaemia and meningitis). (Cartwright, 2010)

Another observes:

Three years ago, we had up to seven children with gastrostomies – we now have 16. Just recently, we have enrolled two students with tracheostomies who need full time medical support. (Fergusson and Carpenter, 2010)

Children and young people with CLDD are a distinctive group of learners requiring educators to make personalised professional responses to their profile of learning need. We have to equip teaching professionals to offer high quality education to these young people to prevent their disenfranchisement from the school system. We need to remodel our pedagogy and generate teaching strategies which will embrace them as learners.

The CLDD research
The programme of research brought together a multidisciplinary team of researchers and advisors with specialisms across education, health, psychology, therapies and neuroscience. In Phase 1 of the project, the research team worked together with 12 special schools and staff, 60 children/young people, and their families, to develop educational resources to enable practitioners to formulate an effective teaching and learning package for the children and young people with complex needs in their classrooms. The project built on and synthesised existing national and international expertise in the field, as well as drawing upon practitioner experience to develop and trial modified and new approaches for these young people. Between September and December 2010, the resources were trialled in 50 further special schools in the UK and 15 internationally. In the third phase of the project, between January and March 2011, the resources were trialled in 12 mainstream schools – six primary and six secondary – and two early years settings.

The outcome of the project was the CLDD Engagement for Learning Resource Framework to support educators of children and young people with CLDD. The key components are available to download online at http://complexld.ssatrust.org.uk. They include:

- CLDD Briefing Packs: a series of information sheets on conditions which commonly co-exist within the profile of CLDD; these give information on effective educational strategies associated with particular disabilities
- The Engagement Profile and Scale: an observation and assessment resource focusing on student engagement for learning
- The Inquiry Framework for Learning: a flexible educational practice framework, promoting multidisciplinary involvement
- Training materials and opportunities.

New generation pedagogy
To educate these children and young people with CLDD meaningfully, effectively and purposefully educators need to evolve new generation pedagogy (Carpenter, 2010a). This pedagogy needs to be within the framework of practice that currently exists in schools. The layers of pedagogy in the classroom therefore become: ‘for all’; ‘additional’; ‘new, innovative and personalised’. The three components of new generation pedagogy are:

Curriculum calibration
The often variable profile of need and attainment of the child with CLDD can easily result in a fragmented curriculum which lacks cohesion, congruence and continuity. Delivery of the curriculum to the child with CLDD needs to be sharp, focused, meaningful and purposeful, as well as balanced. The child has to see relevance and to find themselves truly engaged in a dynamic and coherent process of learning that makes sense to them.

In curriculum calibration, the child’s profile of need is critically reviewed, and their patterns of engagement profiled. A personalised curriculum experience is sought to match each strand of their learning need. We should not underestimate the magnitude of this challenge, which demands a significant shift in thinking and a more inquiry-based style of teaching rather than the curriculum driven styles of the last two decades.

Pedagogical reconciliation
This may require ‘pedagogical re-engineering’: adapting or adjusting an approach from our existing teaching repertoire. In this process, we carefully analyse the structure and components of other successful pedagogies in the field of special educational needs (Lewis and Norwich, 2005), and match them to a new generation of children with CLDD. This is a process of analysis, deduction and refinement, reconciling those pedagogies to the unique profile of the learner with CLDD.
Creation of new and innovative teaching strategies

Alongside pedagogical reconciliation is the need to create and innovate a new pedagogy that is responsive to the new profile of learning need presented by this evolving cohort of children with CLDD. What are the teaching strategies that will enable us to engage this child as an active participant in the dynamics of our lesson, programme or learning environment? We need specific interventions (Wolke, 2009).

The engagement approach

Without engagement, there is no deep learning (Hargreaves, 2006), effective teaching, meaningful outcome, real attainment or quality progress (Carpenter, 2010b). Children with CLDD need to be taught in ways that match their individual learning styles by teachers who recognise their abilities and potential for engagement in learning. Our work must be to transform children with CLDD into active learners by releasing their motivation, unlocking their curiosity and increasing their participation.

Sustainable learning can occur only when there is meaningful engagement. The process of engagement is a journey which connects a child and their environment (including people, ideas, materials and concepts) to enable learning and achievement. (Carpenter et al., 2011)

A focus on engagement can underpin a process of personalised inquiry through which educators can develop effective learning experiences. Using evidence-based knowledge of a child’s successful learning pathways, strategies can be identified, high expectations set, and incremental progress recorded on their journey towards optimal engagement in learning.

The Engagement Profile and Scale is a classroom tool developed in the course of this research. It allows teachers to focus on the child’s engagement as a learner and create personalised learning pathways. It prompts student-centred reflection on how to increase the learner’s engagement leading to deep learning.

Engagement is multi-dimensional, and encompasses awareness, curiosity, investigation, discovery, anticipation, persistence and initiation. By focusing on these seven indicators of engagement within the Engagement Profile and Scale, teachers can ask themselves questions such as: ‘How can I change the learning activity to stimulate Robert’s curiosity?’ ‘What can I change about this experience to encourage Shannon to persist?’ The adaptations made and the effect on the student’s level of engagement can be monitored and recorded, together with a score on the engagement scale. Over time, it is possible to chart the success of interventions and adjustments, and the effect this has had on the student’s levels of engagement. This can then be applied to other learning situations for the student.

Using the CLDD project’s Engagement Profile and Scale

The following is a case study of a child involved in the CLDD research project. It describes an intervention, structured and monitored using the Engagement Profile and Scale, which resulted in her re-engagement with learning.

Case study

Mia was a nine year old girl with a diagnosis of ADHD and Asperger syndrome, who attended a mainstream primary school. She had support from a range of professionals, including the local educational psychology service, the assessment and care management team, the communication/autism team, a consultant paediatrician, a clinical psychologist (CAMHS) and an occupational therapist.

Mia had positive learning strengths. She was ready to engage in activities, and ask questions (e.g. ‘What are we supposed to be doing?’) or comment about work (e.g. ‘Don’t know the answer.’). She could ask for help, but not always in the correct manner. She liked doing jobs for her teacher, and to help her peers. However, she also had difficulties which her teacher wanted to address. These included a misunderstanding of social issues resulting in: a lack of awareness of other people’s personal space; inappropriate volume of voice; lack of understanding of appropriate behaviour; misinterpretation of social events; and a tendency to be physically aggressive. Mia thus found participating in social interaction groups difficult.

The teacher had already put in place some positive interventions for Mia. Mia had responded well to:
- Use of visual timetables and task board; however, the use of visual prompt cards had not worked, as Mia had either hidden them or given them away
- Having tasks/jobs to do
- Frequent positive reinforcement.

Mia’s Engagement Profile

An Engagement Profile was carried out for Mia around a high interest activity, and her behaviours against each of the seven engagement indicators were noted. Using Mia’s demonstration of behaviours in this high interest activity allowed her class team to develop high expectations of how she could potentially behave in other lessons if she was able to engage. The class team also reviewed the Engagement Profile to find out what elements Mia found particularly engaging about the activity, and thought about how they could generalise any engaging aspects of the high interest activity to one of Mia’s low engagement activities.

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Mia’s engagement for learning behaviours in the low interest activity were scored in the context of her high interest activity behaviours, which were taken to represent a high score benchmark of four on the Engagement Scale.

**Mia’s engagement scales**

Following discussion, and after observing one of her low engagement activities – a numeracy lesson – the target chosen for Mia’s intervention was ‘to engage in the first part of a numeracy lesson’. It was apparent that she could concentrate in short bursts only, and that the expectation that, along with her class, she would sit and attend to the one-hour numeracy session was unattainable for Mia. Mia’s other needs, mentioned above, were also borne in mind when developing intervention strategies.

Mia’s first numeracy lesson led to a mid-score of ‘10’ on the Engagement Scale (maximum score: 28). Although initially she appeared ready to learn (sitting quietly; correct equipment on her desk; looking focused) Mia quickly disengaged and was largely disengaged throughout the lesson – listening to peers’ jokes, playing with equipment on her desk. A job – handing out books to her peers – degenerated into Mia throwing the books at them. The work given was above her ability, although when given one-to-one support and reduced workload, she focused and tried really hard at the numeracy task. Mia’s class team considered this to be representative of her lack of engagement during numeracy.

Over the term-long intervention period, a staged series of interventions was put in place for Mia. These included:

- Changing Mia’s seat so she was less distracted and had a clear view of the whiteboard
- She was given an easy initial numeracy activity which she enjoyed to focus her attention
- The one-hour numeracy lesson was broken down into manageable time chunks for Mia, each with its own tasks/activities. Mia could sustain engagement in the numeracy lesson for the short time periods, and an activity box was provided for Mia to use during scheduled breaks during the hour’s lesson, which were shown on her visual timetable. When Mia had completed the numeracy work agreed, she was able to self-regulate her need for sensory input with a favoured sensory activity, before turning to her next numeracy activity
- ‘Reminder’ symbols in front of her on table acted as stepped instructions for her task
- A helping hand (made with Mia) was given as a tool to attract attention and to remind her of the appropriate way to do so
- A visual schedule so Mia knew what she was supposed to be doing now and next
- Use of timer, so Mia knew how long she had to spend on her activity box before returning to the maths activity
- A differentiated numeracy sheet so she was not over-faced
- Working with a partner, which gave opportunity for focused social interaction
- Responsibility for jobs to be earned by completion of numeracy tasks
- Reward stickers for using her ‘helping hand’ to act as motivation.

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The interventions were successful, and Mia was able to complete focused work during her numeracy lesson, interspersed with specific times for self-regulatory sensory activities (activity box). The class team were considering extending the intervention by reducing the length of Mia’s self-regulatory periods, and increasing the time she was engaged in numeracy. From a lesson in which she had had a low level of engagement, Mia was now able to engage for most of the numeracy lesson with the support of interventions. Following the period of implementation of the Engagement for Learning Resource Framework, Mia’s teacher gave feedback about Mia’s continuing engagement in learning:
Mia has become more settled in class. She will listen and focus on her work. She does not shout out during a lesson. It has also helped her to develop social skills. Mia has found that she can work with other children and is not so isolated. She rarely shows aggression towards others and her self-esteem has developed.

Making resources for [Mia] was not a big issue, and actually involving [her] in making the resources was a positive thing. The response of the other children was interesting in that they accepted that ‘something different’ was happening. Strategies used have become an integral part of the lesson. Other children who do not have complex needs but behaviour issues have used some of the ideas to improve their engagement.

Gaining insight into complex learning difficulties and being given tools to develop personalised learning pathways has enabled [Mia] to successfully move forward in [her] learning. A member of the communication and autism team who support the school [one or two visits a term] has been made aware of the research taking place and shown some of the ideas we have used with Mia. They have had copies of some of the resources used with the children and are suggesting their use in other schools!

Conclusion

The Engagement profile and scale allows educators to trial different ways of working with students and to collect evidence about which approaches work best for the student. Collaboration is a corner stone of the inquiry approach – with families, with colleagues from other disciplines, with the whole class team, and with the student themself. Insights from one perspective can create success for the student across their whole learning experience.

Over the course of the CLDD research project, research schools carried out inquiry-based interventions on a short-term basis. Each period of intervention lasted for one term. For many students who had been priority concerns for their schools, this was long enough for educators to gain an insight into ways of engaging them. The educators were then able to generalise the adaptations they had made to engage the student into other learning areas, and move their focus to other students who were disengaged. Other students needed an extended period of intervention so that school staff could explore in depth how they could engage the student in learning.

The capacity to transform a child’s life for the better, and equip them to enjoy active citizenship, is at the heart of education. For many school leaders this ethos is what drives them to ensure that their schools are at the cutting edge of practice with a curriculum that embraces each student, however complex their needs, as an active learner. Many students with CLDD are disengaged from learning – actively or passively. To re-engage them as learners requires more than differentiation (Porter and Ashdown, 2002); an intensive approach is needed. Students with CLDD need to follow unique learning pathways, which take educators beyond differentiation into personalising learning. At this level of student need, educators, and their leaders, need to respond with practitioner-led, inquiry-based approaches.

CLDD Briefing Packs

http://complexld.ssatrust.org.uk/project-resources/cldd-briefing-packs.html

There are ten briefing packs each of which focuses on a condition which is commonly found to overlap with others in children with complex learning difficulties and disabilities (CLDD).

The packs cover the areas of:

- Attachment disorders
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Autism and autistic spectrum disorders (ASD)
- Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder
- Fragile-X syndrome
- Mental health
- Prematurity
- Rare chromosome disorders
- Sensory impairments
- The Effects of Drug Use & Smoking During Pregnancy

Each of the ten packs includes:

(a) Briefing sheet: This sheet provides initial information about these conditions for those who want a brief introduction (eg teachers and higher level teaching assistants). For example Fragile X Syndrome: What is Fragile X, Indicators of Fragile X, Implications for teaching and learning, supporting students with Fragile X. It also provides references to some key texts about the condition.

(b) Classroom support sheet: This sheet provides ‘must have’ basic information about the condition for staff newly arrived in the classroom and needing to work immediately with a young person who has that condition. This may include strengths, difficulties, and a range of strategies/approaches to use in the classroom.

(c) Information sheet: For those who would like to follow up the topic in greater depth, this sheet provides more information with further references. There is also a glossary to explain any terms or concepts not explained in the sheets. More information about the packs, their function and tips for use can be found at the above website.
References


Supporting Children Born Premature in the Classroom

Conference report compiled by Professor Barry Carpenter, iNet Chair in Special and Inclusive Education, SSAT, and Jo Egerton, Research Project Co-ordinator, SSAT

This article is compiled from the presentations to the National Forum for Neuroscience in Special Education Annual Conference, held in London, UK on 31 January 2013, Entitled ‘The learning and neurodevelopmental needs of children born pre-term – a conference to bridge thinking and understanding between education and neuroscience across the school years’. The Conference was given in partnership with Bliss, the UK national organization for prematurity born children, (www.bliss.org.uk/), and generously funded by The Waterloo Foundation.

More than 50,000 babies are born prematurely each year in the UK (about one in eight children). In the UK, preterm birth is defined as fewer than 37 weeks gestation, very preterm as 28-32 weeks and extremely preterm as fewer than 28 weeks gestation. Press reports often record children born prematurely at 26, 25 or even 24 weeks, and the EPICure study found that around 53 per cent of these extremely premature infants survive. But what happens when they enter the school system?

In every classroom, there are likely to be at least four prematurely born children, and one in every hundred will have been born very or extremely premature – a prevalence similar to autism. Although as infants and toddlers, they appear to catch up with their peers, children born three months premature are three to four times more likely to struggle in school than their full term peers, and these difficulties persist into their teenage years. At 15-16 years they are 2-3 times more likely to have emotional problems (Gardner, 2004). Understanding these problems and their origins has important implications for potential teaching styles and interventions. However, few schools ask parents about their child’s birth history, which would help educators to be proactive in responding to these children’s difficulties.

Children born extremely preterm are often ‘wired differently’ and present different profiles of learning need. Even premature children who do not show apparent difficulties have ‘persistent and mildly poorer grammatical skills and verbal working memory’ (Lee et al., 2011). It is ironic that in infancy these children have enormous amounts of money spent to ensure their survival and health in hospital, yet, once discharged, little is done to support their continuing development.

continued
Andy Cole, CEO of Bliss, the special care baby charity, noted, ‘Parents of extremely premature babies are increasingly interested in the longer term educational and developmental needs of their children.’ However, educators feel ill-prepared to meet the learning needs of this group of children. A survey by the University of Warwick (Henderson et al. 2012) found that although 89% of 120 teachers said they were likely to teach a child born prematurely, only 6% felt they had received sufficient training. Understanding these problems and their origins has important implications for potential teaching styles and interventions.

Possible barriers to learning for children born premature

To enable children born premature to become effective learners, their learning barriers need to be identified and overcome (Department for Education (DfE), 2012). Yet if educators do not receive training on the learning needs of these children, how can they fulfill these expectations? They need preparation to teach these children differently according to their learning needs.

Children and young people born preterm may have a range of special educational needs, or none at all. The EPICure study, which has followed all children born prematurely in England in 1995, found that, at age 6 years, 32% had mild disabilities, 24% had moderate disabilities and 22% had severe disabilities; over 50% of children born very or extremely premature survive with disabilities.

Reduced white matter, white matter injury and brain hemorrhaging associated with premature birth can result in developmental delay, motor difficulties (e.g. risk of cerebral palsy), sensory impairment, cognitive and executive function difficulties (e.g. problems with linguistic processing speed, memory), emotional and social processing difficulties (e.g. higher anxiety levels, depression and aggression) and intellectual disabilities. EPICure studies found that 60% of these children develop inattention type attention deficit disorder (non-hyperactive), and over 10% develop autistic symptoms. At 11 years old, they are likely to need more educational resources than their full-term peers (Johnson et al., 2009).

Challenges for educators

For educators, there are a number of barriers within the school system to meeting the needs of children and young people born premature; for example:

- Most schools do not currently ask parents about their child’s birth history, which would identify children born premature on school entry, and allow teachers to be proactive
- Without this prior knowledge, educators may dismiss parent concerns about their child’s learning, development or behaviour as over-anxiousness.
- Educators may have unrealistic expectations of children whose age is ahead of their developmental abilities due to their premature birth
- There is comparatively little research on how these children develop or on how to implement effective strategies through their school years.

The EPICure study suggests that educational priorities need to be established for this group of learners at different ages and stages of development, and that schools and parents should consider benefits from deferred or delayed school entry. At age 4.5 years, many are not developmentally ready to sit for extended periods, to focus attention, to have their learning directed, and to learn as part of a large group of children.

Finding solutions

As more has become known of the developmental effects of prematurity, the focus of research has begun to shift to interventions. However, research into effective interventions for school-age children and young people is at an early stage. During his presentation, Dieter Wolke suggested the following educational strategies:

- For less demanding tasks, provide reinforcement and structure them to ensure success; for more demanding tasks, personalise and provide support as appropriate for the young person’s developmental stage
- Find assessments which take account of cognitive workload demands to provide a more detailed picture of strengths and weaknesses for planning support for children born preterm
- Use adaptive computerised working memory training
- To maintain attention (above IQ as the greatest predictor of educational success), educators need to organise learning tasks in smaller chunks
- Use attention training and focussing tasks
- Support social integration by assisting group work, special peer mentoring, and liaising with parents over activities to increase friends
- Use innovative computer assisted interventions to support social skills and integration
- Children and young people with autistic type features and rigidity may cope better with predictable routines and graded changes

Conclusion

As a result of this conference, the following needs relating to children and young people born prematurely were highlighted:

- The need to raise awareness of the impact of prematurity and the associated educational needs among policy makers, health professionals and educators
- The need to generate action.
This action should include:
- Identification of children born premature on school entry, and continuing regular assessment
- Proactive early identification of emerging motor, communication, cognitive, emotional and social difficulties; some may not appear until pre-teenage years
- Published guidance at all levels of the education system
- A focus on identifying effective teaching and learning strategies
- Professional development for educators
- A transdisciplinary approach – including families and a range of professionals – to establish educational, social and developmental priorities for these children and young people.

Without action, as Andy Cole observes, ‘we are asking teachers to teach with one hand tied behind their back. There are children struggling who could learn in a different style.’

Further information

Articles
- Times Educational Supplement: http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6313470

Webpages
- SSAT conference webpage linked to downloads from speakers: http://www.ssatuk.co.uk/ssat/neuroscience-conference/
- Bliss conference webpage: http://www.bliss.org.uk/2013/02/13/premature-children-at-school/

References

Department for Education (DfE) (2011) Support and Aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability. London: DfE.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders: Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Edited by Barry Carpenter, Carolyn Blackburn, Jo Egerton

ISBN 9780415670166
August 2013, 312 pages
Routledge

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs) have emerged as a major phenomenon within the education, health, criminal justice and social care systems of many countries. Current prevalence figures suggest that one in 100 children and young people have FASDs – similar to those for autistic spectrum disorders.

With contributions from leading academics, families and professionals from a range of disciplines around the world, this book offers an invaluable and cutting-edge contribution to how we understand and address the complex social, educational and health needs associated with this growing group of children and young people. The multidisciplinary and family perspectives and insights on FASDs create a rich knowledge base grounded in lived experience.

Any education, social care, criminal justice or health professional working with children and young people with FASDs and their families will find this book a seminal and authoritative resource.
PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AT MODBURY SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Modbury South Primary School, together with Modbury Primary School and Modbury Special School chose to work together as a cluster to learn effective strategies for supporting families in our state school’s system to engage more fully with their child’s learning. The objective, as determined by the federally funded National Partnership, was for Australian schools and teachers to better support students with disabilities, contributing to improved student learning experiences, educational outcomes and transitions to further education or work.

Our intention was for staff at each school to develop effective practices for students with Autism. We acknowledged that Modbury Special school work would differ from our two mainstream schools that include students with disabilities as determined by our inclusion policies. The complexities become more so as the two mainstream sites have a special class each, with a junior primary special class at Modbury South and a Primary Special class at Modbury. This means families living with disability must move their child on from Modbury South for year 3-7 and must move from somewhere else to Modbury for their primary education.

At the outset we determined that all staff required deeper knowledge about how to work successfully with students with Autism Spectrum. It was decided that all staff undertake the online training ‘Understanding Autism’ which although is online is tutored and thus allows for further understanding and collegial learning. It has been re-written and adapted from the UK courses to reflect the needs of teachers and others working with children and young people in Australia. Eight staff from each school participated in the 20 hour online training facilitated by two tutors from Modbury Special School and the Special Education department in DECD state office. Staff gained insights into the world of a student on the Autism Spectrum. The learning was so successful in our day to day interactions which led to changes in the pedagogy used with our students with Autism. We also nominated a teacher to undergo the tutor training in order to tutor all other staff at our site over the next year. The intention was also to tutor staff from our buddy site. Having a buddy site in the second year of the grant was part of the National Partnerships plan.

During this period perceptions from colleagues about the challenges for families living with Autism changed. Our engagement with Professor Barry Carpenter OBE, focused on family centred approaches and inclusive leaders and schools. A pertinent statement from Professor Carpenter that “the parent is the first, last and the sustained educator” in their child’s life and that we as educators are “walking on the journey with children and parents” led us to look at our work with families and how learning should be developed as a partnership.

We realised the importance of engaging our families in their child’s learning journey and we understood the need for all perspectives to be considered if we were to make a difference in some children's lives.

We, as a cluster acknowledged the impact our students with Autism have on our families and that it made them vulnerable. Our job at each site is to provide our vulnerable families with a ‘one stop shop’ to support them in knowing who or where to go for help and to provide the students with quality teaching that will make them resilient adults. In doing so, we created a diamond model which ascertained family’s needs and contributions which further developed into our site Family Charter.

The information for the diamond model and family charter was gained through discussion groups which covered a variety of family structures reflective of our student cohort across the cluster. We included parents of mainstream children, foster carers, social workers, grandparents who were primary carers, other grandparents, parents from ESL backgrounds, parents of Indigenous students, ‘significant others’ such as babysitters or neighbours who regularly look after children together with parent/s of a student with a disability.

We met with families to ascertain what it is they needed from the State School system in the 21st Century and indeed our individual schools. We used digital media and telephone conversations for families who could not attend face to face sessions.

Some questions we asked of our families were:
‘What do you and your family expect of the school community in regards to – communication, support and learning outcomes?’
‘How is the site currently meeting your expectations?’
‘What should your site start/stop/keep doing?’

We had remarkable response and involvement from our families. As a generalisation, families wanted increased communication in a variety of modes including email, social media, newsletters, school websites, communication books and staff available to ‘simply chat’. They wanted support for their child and family to extend beyond the classroom i.e. OSHC, assemblies, support groups, sibling support as well as support from us in educating others and creating an awareness of Autism in our community. Regular Negotiated Education Plan (NEP) meetings, along with schools working with occupational and speech therapists were also high on their list of needs. This resulted in our ongoing work around redeveloping DECD Negotiated Education Plans (NEPs) at our site to suit each individual child. Another outcome was our ‘education’ of families who do not live with disability and the whole child approach through involving interagency services.

continued
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Directing families to interagency support services - both familiar and unknown - e.g. Going Good, Big brother/little brother, Sibling support, support for non-English speaking families, connecting families with CHAC and Vocare programs, support groups for families in ‘tired’ situations, ‘my time’ like groups, buddy system in yard with or without an SGO, section of the resource centre with texts to support families and siblings, early identification, diagnosis and intervention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Educational pathways and post school options, cross campus pathway options, family workshops run by support agencies like SERUI, Autism SA, supporting families with visual communication strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most</td>
<td>Liaison</td>
<td>Liaising with specific services in OT, speech, meetings involving relevant family members and inter-agencies, connecting families with the community, parent group - connecting with other parents, grandparents/friends/teachers for support, having inter-agencies come in to school to support children and communicate with families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Provide copy of school visuals to families, formal and informal meetings - Rope interviews, class blogs, newsletters - class and whole school, email, daily photos via email, term overview, communication diary with class weekly agenda, calendar on website, discussion board on website, NIP meeting in term 1, documents and modified regularly, whole school open day, meet more regularly with families mid-term as a progress update, email to update parents on school events or TRT in class, teacher’s providing TRT with additional information about student in triglet in TRT folder, teacher’s being open to sharing topical information from families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Source interviews, family network, personal triggers, services that have provided support, medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Reinforce programs in home both academic and medical, visuals, practical resources, reinforce programs at school, following home school links at school, social stories between home and school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many</td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>iPad apps, linking families, physical resources, support other families with individual connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>PAC, Governing Council, Policy and Planning Committee, outside advisory groups regional and state, Department for Education and Child Development (DECD), Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FAMILY CONTRIBUTIONS**

**Modbury Cluster welcomes all our children’s families, friends and other significant people in the lives**

Our families can expect

- A welcoming environment
- Approachable staff
- Formal and informal interactions with staff
- Regular assessment and reporting and feedback to families
- Multiple ways of communicating about what is happening in a class and our school e.g. paper and electronic newsletters, term overviews about the class program, calendar on the website, updated and interactive moodle, email, Facebook updates
- Information about family support groups
- Contact with primary carer and buddy families within the school
- Awareness and support around different cultures
- Staff understanding about different disabilities and in particular Autism Spectrum
- Our partnership with inter-agencies for their support
- Sibling support
- Understanding and response to issues and special circumstances

We will fulfill this by

- Providing paper and electronic newsletters and an information update on our website
- Sending out term overviews, class timetables and newsletters in paper form and as part of our school moodle
- Holding community events
- Holding school workshops for adult family participation
- Providing families with opportunities to visit classes and see learning in action
- Supporting the family involvement in a variety of ways within the school
- Using IT to share information about what is happening in the school, classrooms and our staff and students learning
- Accessing and working with outside support agencies e.g. SAPOL, Autism SA, Occupational Therapists
- Providing teachers with the time and tools to prepare clear, informative feedback for parents about their child’s learning
- Develop brochures to support family understanding
- Using ICT to connect families with services within our school and wider community

Our practical support of the Family Charter

- Clear communication of the Family Charter to all our families
- A welcoming process for new families to our school
- Flexible meeting times and opportunities
- Offering and support family support groups
- Introducing and supporting a buddy family system
- Providing a budget to introduce, maintain and sustain the Family Charter
- Introduce a family support group meeting/sessions
- Supporting family learning of ICT skills in line with our 21st century learning initiative

**July 2013**

SERUPDATE

**Page 10**
From the initial professional learning with Professor Barry Carpenter to the current time the following changes have been implemented at our school:

- Family charter on display, accessible and included in student enrolment packs
- OnLine Training: Understanding Autistic Spectrum Disorders developed by Online Training (A UK company) for all staff including OSHC staff
- The ‘Modsquad’ family support group established for mutual conversation, accessing professional speakers, joint elearning and readings from newly purchased books around disability
- School website developed through a moodle and linking to class blogs, ‘Modsquad’ blog and additional support agencies like Autism SA, Families SA, etc.
- Digital copies of school information and newsletters being provided to families who request this format
- Class Blogs being designed by classroom teachers to provide an ‘open’ and communicative relationship
- Ongoing release for staff, teachers and SSOs to support their individual needs around learning to work with or teach students on the Autism Spectrum.
- Continued engagement with Professor Barry Carpenter
- Continued work with Siblings Australia including parent workshops, family workshops and professional people workshops
- ‘Buddying’ with East Torrens Primary School to support them on their journey

Our journey of enhanced partnerships between families and our schools is for and with our families. We have had a ‘cultural shift’ at Modbury South Primary School and this is reflected in staff conversations together with staff ongoing learning which leads to constantly changing or modifying practices.

Our current work revolves around our partnership with families in supporting their children who are the siblings of a child or children with a disability. We are doing this through providing opportunities for a sibling support group made up of our students who have a sibling with a disability. As well we have facilitated workshops for adult family members together with professional people from outside DECD agencies to further understanding and support of children living with a sibling with a disability. We have recently started learning about the Engagement Profile and Scale, which was developed by Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) (UK). The Engagement Profile and Scale is a classroom tool developed for effective teaching and learning for children with complex learning difficulties and disabilities. It allows teachers to focus on the child’s engagement as a learner and create personalised learning pathways. It prompts student-centred reflection on how to increase the learner’s engagement leading to deep learning. We know our journey with this will lead to new and improved changes in our pedagogy and practices around students with disabilities.

Di Clements, Principal
Melissa Thomas, Junior Primary Special Class Teacher,
P 82643527

Adelaide West Special Education Centre (Ad West) is located at Taperoo, adjacent to Ocean View College (OVC). AdWest opened officially in March 2011, though students began attending in November 2010. Ad West is a purpose built school for students with physical and associated disabilities. Designing a school for students with complex needs required extensive consultation between architects and staff. The result is a five star energy rated building providing;

- A myriad of indoor and outdoor learning and play spaces
- A gymnasium with wheelchair accessible stage
- Active and calm sensory rooms
- Bright and airy classrooms with interconnecting learning spaces
- Modern, open plan resource centre
- Functional independent living unit
- Hygiene areas with under floor heating

The building has floor to ceiling glass providing natural lighting and a feel of the outside. Classrooms have wet and dry areas and fully functional kitchens. It is equipped with an overhead ceiling tracking hoist system which runs throughout both the classrooms and hygiene areas. The system provides vital manual handling assistance when used for personal care, sensory and curriculum activities. State of the art wireless technology provides support for our classroom interactive whiteboards, laptops, desktops and we manage 55 iPads for student curriculum and communication needs.

Ad West Link programs are hosted by Mitcham Primary School, Unley High School, and Roma Mitchell Secondary College.

continued
Students who attend the Link programs usually have significant physical disabilities and are supported to successfully access mainstream classes and curriculum. These programs are highly successful and valued by families and students, and staff from our school and the host schools. The students are an integral and integrated part of the host school and add to the fabric of the school culture.

Ad West offers a State-wide Outreach Service. It is open to staff in public and independent schools. The team provide advice and support in relation to curriculum modification, disability awareness, students with complex communication needs, and the Mobility Opportunities Via Education (MOVE) program. This is a free service and can be accessed via phone or email to the Ad West site.

A percentage of our students have high health care needs and may be very fragile. Many are supported by Health Support Officers (HSOs) or nurses, who work for the Child, Youth, Women’s Health Service. The staff provide personalised healthcare including gastrostomy meals, hydration, oxygen and suctioning support. Novita Children’s Services provide therapy for most students.

When necessary our students and their families are supported by the Palliative Care Team from the Women’s and Children’s Hospital. Together we provide support to families that are coming to terms with their child’s disability, health, grief and loss. This time is challenging and can be very emotional for everyone. We seek the support of DECD social workers, the Palliative Care team and look after our own mental health by supporting each other, acknowledging the grief processes.

Through the National Partnership: More Support for Students with Disabilities; Centres of Expertise for Students with Complex Communication Needs and Emerging Technology Project, staff from SERU, Ad West and DECD speech pathology work together to develop and implement a sustainable communication program using mainstream technologies for students with complex communication needs in South Australian mainstream schools and units.

As a specialist site we look to the research and knowledge of experts to enhance our own practice and support people new to our school.

www.education.gov.uk/complexneeds

Unlike the students in our Link programs who participate in mainstream programs and subjects, the students at Ad West access specialist programs including Intensive Interaction, MOVE, Four Blocks to Literacy, and modified SACE and Australian curriculum.

Intensive Interaction (II) is a program used with pre-emergent learners to raise awareness of the presence of others and the opportunity to interact with that person. It encourages initial engagement in a fun and interactive way. Once this awareness of self and others has been achieved our students moved on to using switches for cause and effect and communication. II is a great program to initiate interaction and engagement. To learn about II we engaged the services of Professor Mark Barber.

For more information about Intensive Interaction go to www.drmarkbarber.co.uk/intintaustria.html

In the pursuit of best practice communication strategies for students with complex communication needs we enlisted the services of Jane Farrall, an educator and speech pathologist from Victoria. Together with Jane, staff have developed expertise in the use of iDevices and applications to support communication and learning. In addition, low-tech options such as yes/no symbols, aided language displays and Pragmatic Organised Dynamic Display (PODD) have enabled students to become better communicators. Our staff and families are seeing positive changes in the students’ communication in a short period of time. Too often we underestimate the ability of a child who is non-verbal and physically disabled. A common barrier is accessibility. Our staff are well-informed about accessibility options to enable switch access for students with physical disabilities. With Jane’s support Ad West is fast becoming a centre of expertise for students with Complex Communication Needs.
All students can learn. And if we don’t believe this then we are in the wrong job. In 2013 we are continuing our work with Jane and are implementing the Four Blocks to Literacy program. The program is a structured literacy and writing program based on the premise that no student is too disabled to learn about literacy. In a short period of time we have seen improved letter recognition, comprehension and improved communication. However it has meant a significant change to lesson programs and timetables.

**Jane’s website is [www.janefarrall.com](http://www.janefarrall.com)**

Students need to learn to move so that they can move to learn. The MOVE program and dedicated staff has enabled this to occur. In 2010 Jackie Butler, teacher, went to the USA to become an accredited MOVE International Trainer (MIT). Prior to this all staff were trained in the MOVE program by MITs from the USA. In 2012 Ad West became an internationally accredited MOVE model site. In February 2014 we will be hosting an International MOVE conference enabling others to become trained in the basic MOVE program or become MITs for those who have been successfully implementing the MOVE program for more than a year.

The MOVE program is a rigorous, well-documented program which sets goals and comprehensively charts progress. Students learn to sit, stand, transfer and walk while participating in learning activities. Movement is always for a purpose, including transferring and weight bearing whilst having personal care needs attended to, practicing walking to a preferred activity, and practicing sitting and strengthening trunk control during a class activity. Our school community has been astounded with the success of this program and the difference that it has made to our students and their families.

If you would like to know more about MOVE contact Jackie or go to [www.move-international.org](http://www.move-international.org)

The above programs are or will be incorporated into the Australian Curriculum and SACE. We are focussing on how we can bring it all together. At times it is challenging.

Implementing these programs successfully would not be possible without a clear shared vision, and staff willing to engage in learning and challenge their own practices. The importance of having a go should not be underestimated. I am fortunate to lead a staff that are willing to have a go and are open to opportunity and change.

Believe that YOU can make a difference and you will. Believe that students can learn and they will.

Please feel free to contact us at Adelaide West Special Education Centre for more information or if you would like a school tour or visit.

**Sylvia Flato**
Principal
Adelaide West Special Education Centre
P 8248 9100

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**OPENING THE WINDOW**

I’ve had plenty of days where I feel emotionally numb/vacant and feel like I am watching life go by looking from a window. Everything is happening on the other side of the window and I’m not part of it. Maybe that’s what a store mannequin would feel if it had the ability to feel emotions! I wonder whether kids with ASD feel this or whether it is just the parents who experience this pain.

These were the words of a parent at the first meeting of our Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Parent support group last year. It was the most powerful meeting I have ever been to as parents sat around a table for the first time as a group, sharing their journey of love, tears, anger and anguish as they dealt with the trials and joys of living with a child diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum. Each child was different, but each story had a familiar ring of the frustrations, the expense, the loneliness, the exhaustion, the unconditional love and the determination to do everything they can to support their children.

That meeting was the beginning of regular ones, once a term where parents share their ideas, resources and concerns and hear what we are doing as a staff to make their child’s experiences at school as successful as we can. The adults have a glass of wine and nibbles and the children bring along a plate of food to share. We have a couple of child-care people who look after the children and their siblings. At our first meeting one of the older girls spoke to me about how excited she was about meeting other children who were the same as her, as she had not shared any information about her disability with her peers. Even in a school of 250 children where we pride ourselves in being an open, supportive, positive community there was that sense of isolation!
This term we were fortunate enough to be able to go to the Special Education Resource Unit at Henley Beach, after we negotiated an “out of hours” information session with the very supportive team there. We hired a maxi cab and travelled to the Unit for our six o’clock session. Our numbers were depleted by the timing and also a chicken pox outbreak that impacted on a few families, but for those who made it, it was a wonderful opportunity to see and hear about the wide variety of resources and services that were available to families and schools.

Anne Creighton-Arnold and Kerry Papadopoulos shared information about the various Outreach programs, the upcoming Special Education Expo and resources, specific to the needs of ASD children and programs old and new, with much discussion, advice and “hands on” exploration. They had a wealth of knowledge and, as has been the experience with our SSOs who have called for advice about a particular problem we were experiencing, highlighted the advisory service that is available through SERU. The conversations between the parents about what worked for their children and what issues they were experiencing were valuable for all.

The parents were then able to explore what the Unit has to offer and to borrow things that they thought might be useful for their child. At 7:30 we piled back on to the mini-bus with all our “goodies.” I take my hat off to one brave mum who is thinking of getting her six year old a drum kit, so she borrowed one to see how it would go. This is one of the many benefits of the service as parents and teachers are able to trial resources to see if they meet the needs of individual children before they go out and buy them.

The National Partnerships Autism funding that we have received has provided us with wonderful opportunities to explore, discard or take on board various strategies to support our ASD children. It has allowed us to purchase resources, and we are fortunate enough to be able to test things out or speak to the experts at SERU before we outlay money. The money runs out at the end of 2013 and we are determined to be self-sufficient as we build capacity by developing our skills and resources, and continue to provide an environment that is engaging and supportive for staff, students and families.

Gaye Glade-Wright
Principal, Eden Hills Primary School
P 8278 2243

Golden Grove High School (GGHS) has had the good fortune to be a lead school in the National Partnerships, Supporting students with Disabilities, Federal initiative.

Our school is a complex site. GGHS is the public school partner of a three school campus, (Golden Grove High School, Gleseson College and Pedare College), sharing some joint facilities, timetable structure, year 12 access to classes across the campus’, cross campus faculty meetings once a term and cross campus middle and senior school assemblies showcasing student leadership and excellence in the Arts.

Within Golden Grove High School we also have a Disability Unit catering for fifty plus students across three middle school classes and one senior class. These students are integrated into mainstream home groups but have their subject learning delivered by specialist teachers in small class settings with additional School Service Officer support. Placement is via Regional application and an Educational Psychologist recommendation.

Within the mainstream setting are also students with Negotiated Education Plans and below benchmark academic attainment; they included students with intellectual disability and autism.

GGHS actively promotes inclusive practice for all students with a disability both in the Unit and in mainstream. Our peer support program for year 11 students supports all year 8 students to transition safely and happily to high school. Similarly some year 11 students support the Unit with 1:1 reading practice during their study line and some lesson delivery via a SACE Childcare subject. The most positive outcome of this has been the fostering of a greater understanding of individual need by all parties.

Listen to the MUSTN’TS, child.
Listen to the DON’TS
Listen to the SHOULDN’TS
The IMPOSSIBLES, the WON’TS
Listen to the NEVER HAVES
Then listen close to me-
Anything can happen, child,
ANYTHING can be.”

SHEL SILVERSTEIN

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Access to facilities, in particular Home Economics kitchens, Science labs, Tech workshops, Art studios and Sport facilities augment learning experiences for the students in authentic ways.

Within the National Partnerships framework the focus across the site has been on;
- Engaging families
- Professional learning
- Autism & differentiation
- Assistive Technology

Professional development across the site has been targeted to develop teacher mentors within each learning area. Fifteen staff members have engaged with the on-line Autism training package, developing a deeper understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorders. Other staff members and School Support Officers have attended one day training through Autism SA. This has enabled greater capacity for professional discussion, strategy development and intervention that recognises individual differentiated teaching and learning. From these training opportunities, the staff have contributed to digital presentations that become part of our future referenced resource.

1. Supporting students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
2. Understanding and tips for supporting students with Dyslexia.
4. Aboriginal Student Support.
5. Supporting students with Challenging behaviour.
6. HOM – Accuracy, Persistence, Communicating with Clarity and Precision, Metacognition- Thinking about your thinking.
7. Autism- Understandings for a High School setting.
8. Autism understandings from an SSO perspective.

Our work this year has also included a deeper understanding of differentiated teaching and learning and its application for all students with special learning needs.

Six teachers travelled to Melbourne in May for the Hawker Brownlow conference. Our association with this international conference over the last ten years has been instrumental in developing our Quality Teaching and learning pedagogy.

The key speakers we listened and learnt from were; Carol Ann Tomlinson, (differentiation), Jay McTigh, (Understanding by Design) and Lee Crockett, (C21st learning in the digital age)
All three speakers affirmed the underlying intent of TfEL and ACARA frameworks, the thinking pedagogy of the Habits of Mind and the abundant higher order thinking frameworks that favour an interactive enquiry based pedagogy.

For students with special needs, a differentiated curriculum that considers alternative options through content, product, process and environment is a crucial element for personal achievement or personal best.

Alongside this, strategies for formative assessment, feedback and adjustments throughout the learning that respond to student proximity to; the big picture understanding of the learning area and what we want them to know and do is the professional dance of mutual teaching and learning that we continually refine.

We know that this requires professional discussion, idea sharing and the development of responsive routines and pedagogy on a regular basis.

Parents, carers and teachers alike at Golden Grove High School are united in their vision for our student’s future. We understand that the high school experience can be finished in a flash and then what? We understand the shared responsibility of the development of life skills in a world that can be fast and unrelenting in what it demands of our young people. We collectively recognise that every individual needs to find their place in the world with real purpose behind it, a job, a social circle, connections with people and place.

I commend the work of our teachers, leaders, support service personnel, students and families on their team approach. The following initiatives that have engaged students in learning for life exemplify that.

- A Community Access program which places students interactively in the community each week managing money, transport, personal safety, practical application of numeracy and literacy skills, exploration of leisure and employment options and awareness of their greater community.
- Group work experience opportunities one day per week for senior students with thanks to Phoenix and Barkuma. Authentic experiences designed to develop work ready skills.
- Certificate 11 Food Processing option at senior level- again authentic industry standard skill instruction.
- Senior Catering Program with opportunities for onsite catering events and external collaborations.
- On-site Careers and leisure Expo in term 2.
- Bi-annual school camp for Unit students to support independence and social skills.
- Disability SA “Operation Flinders” for selected year 9 & 10 boys to develop resilience and self-esteem.
- Participation in sporting events that encourage personal best and experiential participation.
- Involvement with the Variety Club at Discos, film events and Xmas parties developing responsible social skills.
- A challenging curriculum with a focus on practical skills and practical applications for learning.
- 1:1 laptop access for all students.

Vikki Walkom
Senior Leader, Learner Support
Golden Grove High School
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Australasian Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Conference

The Public Health Association of Australia and the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education are hosting the Australasian Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Conference (FASD) in Brisbane on 19-20 November 2013. This conference aims to share knowledge about FASD and bring people together to exchange ideas, practice, research and policy discourse. Registration opens soon, go to www.phaa.net.au for more information.
A FAMILY AND CHILD CENTRED TEAM APPROACH TO COMPLEX NEEDS

Port Elliot Primary School, and in particular the Wellbeing and Learning Support Team, is highly regarded by our families of children with complex needs, the wider local community and by professionals within the region, for providing a holistic best practice approach. The team works with children with extremely challenging behaviours, mild intellectual disabilities (including non-verbal), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), speech and language difficulties, hearing impairment and physical disabilities, Aboriginal children and children who have been suspended or excluded from other local schools and have major attendance issues. We also work with children and their families who are trauma affected and have a strong focus on mental health. Dr Lauren Miller (Women’ & Children Hospital) has been involved in a study of the mental health of some of our students and families over a number of years. The findings showed that mental health is an area of vulnerability for many in our school community.

As we reflect on our practice and try to identify what it is that makes what we do different and highly successful, it is clear that the well-being of any given child is always at the forefront of our response. Having genuine relationships with the children we teach and with significant players in the child’s life is central to how we operate. Empowering our families to be an integral part of their child’s journey allows positive change to emerge.

What has evolved over the last few years is a proactive and flexible team approach which is driven by our shared passion for the children. We endeavour to respond flexibly and sensitively to individual needs and have an unwritten mandate to look for solutions and use whatever resources we can, to devise (and revise) plans which will reduce the potential for behavioural escalation, suspension or exclusion. For some children, school is a safer place than home and for others being sent home is a reward for their negative behaviour. We feel that the greatest growth occurs when children stay at school and are supported and explicitly taught the skills to understand how their reactions impact on their learning and relationships and how to move forward.

In many ways the ‘National Partnerships Team around the Child’ strategy describes our model, except that it is used as a whole site approach. The hub of our team, which encircles any child with significant needs and their family, is the School Counsellor, the Special Education teacher and an exceptional group of SSOs who are respected and valued as equal partners in the teaching, nurturing and understanding of our children. There are also classroom teachers, school leadership and DECD Service Providers who are all part of the support framework. A multi-agency approach is used which includes CAMHS, some GPs, private OTs and the local health service. The school has an agreement with a private psychologist who practices on-site with families and/ or children who need therapy and this is easily accomplished during the school day. In term 3, in conjunction with the School Counsellor, she will run a 8 week on-site course for a group of school students she has been working with privately. A neuro-linguistic practitioner/counsellor has had a similar relationship with the school community by providing private therapy sessions on-site for some families, attending NEP meetings and providing training to staff.

The Counsellor’s Room and an adjoining classroom called ‘The Shack’ are linked spaces which are used by the whole team to support, teach and give respite to any child who needs it. Children know that both spaces are safe, easy places to be and a positive feel is generated by the relationships children across all year levels have with the whole team. Both areas are open for lunch time activities on certain days and there is a strong sense of ownership and that these are special places where you will be listened to. Parents also feel comfortable dropping in and know that someone will be able to listen when needed.

The presence of a number of animals including Lucy the labrador, our therapy dog, adds another tactile and sensory dimension. The team has an intimate knowledge of the children with complex needs in the school and we communicate insights and incidents to each other, informally throughout the day, through team meetings and through more formal Student Review Meetings.

While as a team we all have specific roles and responsibilities for student groups and programs there is a spirit of collaboration and fluidity which underpins the way we work and allows us to be responsive to needs as they arise, through tag teaming and on the spot flexibility. One of the key elements of our planning is to identify the risk and protective factors that need to be considered for the child’s mental health and well-being. We can then help to strengthen well-being or improve resistance to potential risk factors which may make it difficult for students to be successful in their learning. We back each other up and are adept at adapting and adjusting at short notice.

continued
For example, the Special Ed teacher may be teaching the Primary Shack Class; a child who is dealing with grief and not coping in her home class spends time with the Counsellor on specific strategies which will help her to re engage in the classroom, she will then have some down time in the shack before being supported to re-engage in her class. At the same time a child with ASD may need some respite from sensory overload or classroom changes so is brought in by an SSO or teacher, is incorporated into an activity or group and then later helped to re-engage in the classroom.

Recently a child in Year 5 with ASD and with significant home issues, had been very disruptive in class and the usual behaviour management strategies weren’t working. At risk of being suspended (which would place the child in an stressful environment) and because we have had a long history of supporting him and his younger sister, an alternative program was negotiated for a week, slotting him into the Shack program, time with the Counsellor and a few sessions in his home class. This strategy gave respite to the child, the class teacher and the class and allowed the team to work explicitly on strategies for dealing with the underlying issues which were triggering the behaviour. In 2010 this particular child was removed from his class for violent behaviour and was supported one to one in the Shack on a personalised program beginning with part time attendance. With intensive support he was integrated gradually into the Shack class (about 10 children at the time) and by the end of the year was supported back in a class. He had a successful two years in his class with the same teacher but his home life continued to be difficult. His needs and that of his sister are very complex but he is now able to articulate his emotional state and self-regulate some of the time and he knows that school is safe, consistent and fair.

There is usually a small group of children who are on our radar at any one time and we make a point of informally checking in on them each morning. If they are not ready for their school day due to trauma at home, we work with them using the language and strategies they have been taught, to help them be emotionally ready for the demands of a school day. This will almost always result in pre-empting disruptive behaviour or disengagement.

A large ICAN grant in 2012 enabled us to be proactive in other ways to increase engagement, attendance, resiliency and self esteem, for a group of predominantly male students (a high number of ASD children) and a cohort of ‘at risk’ girls. By having a focus on group activities children felt that they belonged and weren’t being singled out. The programs were coordinated by the Counsellor and utilised community connections. The YWCA ran ‘Healthy Bodies Healthy Minds’ mentoring programs for girls and boys; the School Counsellor, Chaplain and local council Youth Worker ran a series of workshops covering life skills, identity and self-esteem; a local surfing identity ran workshops constructing wooden skim boards and hand planes; an SSO worked with targeted children and our therapy dog; a play scape garden was developed and a cooking group was run by Fleurieu Foodies, a volunteer group.

There are also numerous other community groups whom we include in our framework of support such as: charitable groups who provide food parcels once a term, volunteers who mentor and the local health service who do home visits on our recommendation. A local artist runs an Art as Expression class once a week for ASD and trauma affected children. A local historical museum adjacent to the school has mentored boys and taught them skills to restore old machinery. A group of primary aged girls who are part of the Shack class for their academic learning are also part of a Protective Behaviours group run by the Counsellor.

The School Counsellor has also driven the Play is the Way program and currently Kids Matter as first wave whole site interventions. The Special Education teacher is working towards fine tuning a whole site approach to Intervention and Support.

There are many stories that could be shared about individual children’s journeys but each one is complex and difficult to do justice to. Undoubtedly a strong team approach which connects family, school, professionals and the community is central to our success. The shared vision for enabling the best possible result for every child and their family, a willingness to think differently and see possibilities and the courage and conviction to give it a go, is what has guided us on our journey of fulfilling the daunting mandate to provide an inclusive child centred approach to learning, for children with disabilities and complex needs.

Karen Robinson
School Counsellor
Louise Jaensch
Special Education teacher
Port Elliot Primary School
P 8554 3399
Gordon Education Centre is a Special School of 72 students in Mount Gambier. Our school has a focus on Literacy and is currently in the second year of the National Partnerships Programme – The LitCon Special. The Teaching and Learning NEP component of the LitCon special has proved successful with schools, families and services. Teachers across the Limestone Coast have produced NEPs that include behaviour considerations embedded in Literacy/Social/Numeracy targets. It is from this work that we appointed a coordinator – Leah Dowdell, to build on our behaviour processes. We have the belief that all students (people) exhibit behaviours at times that make learning difficult. Our new processes, although concentrating on the most challenging behaviours, can be applied to any student behaviour if required.

Currently we have four important processes that may detail information about behaviour.

The LitCon Special NEP. The teaching and learning NEP details SMARTAR targets and uses language that is consistent with TEEL. Behaviours are addressed through specific short and medium term goals.

The “Pink Slip”. This is a form that allows staff to detail issues with behaviour as soon as practicable. Information is then transferred to EDSAS. Staff are asked to consider possible reasons for the behaviour when filling out the form. This may not always be possible but it is good practice to view incidents of behaviour more holistically.

Behaviour Profile. Leah Dowdell has developed a proforma that allows staff to take a more detailed analysis of a student. The Behavioural Profile details personal history, prior agency involvement, past and current observable behaviours and includes considerations for both the learning environment and the curriculum.

The first step in managing behaviours is to clearly define the behaviour. The use of the motivation scale allows staff to identify the purpose behind the behaviour, looking beyond the immediate reactive responses. Staff, students and families can then work to improve behaviours through all learning areas, creating confident classroom management procedures that include appropriate expectations, goals and relevant consequences.

It has been proven to be useful to work on avoiding the negative cycle- using the plan to teach the positive skills and behaviours in a manner that benefits all.
S.P.I.C.E.(S) Profile.
This is the work of Dr. Jenny Curran, Psychiatrist in Developmental Disability Psychiatry, Centre for Disability Health Disability Services, Community and Home Support SA, Dept. for Communities and Social Inclusion.

The SPICE(S)Profile focuses on Social Development, Physical/Sensory Development, Intellectual Development, Communication Development, Emotional Development and Sense of Connectedness. This tool enables the practitioner to review, summarise and communicate regarding an individual’s developmental pattern.

More recently we have been working to bring these four areas together to develop a more rounded approach to working with our more challenging students. By investigating all areas relating to a student, we can identify the personal, particular and unique overview and how we can best meet their needs. It can also assist us to define problem areas throughout the school day, students who may ‘clash’ regularly, areas of schooling and/or home life that may appear challenging or demanding.

Although our processes work well for us we are very interested in combining all the above into an intranet version. This will allow staff to enter information in a secure manner using “online” software (iPad, Laptop, Stand alone PC). When this is achieved we will be able to gather more meaningful data that will help all students. For instance we will be able to identify hotspots in the yard (at the push of a button) negating the need for endless surveys.

Should you require any further information, please contact Leah Dowdell or Rob Barton.

Rob Barton
Principal, Gordon Education Centre
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At BANB7 we aim to provide a holistic approach to intervention by providing authentic, multi-sensory learning experiences for all children.

Blair Athol North B-7 School, A Community Snap Shot:

Blair Athol North B-7 School came about through the amalgamation of Kilburn and Gepps Cross Primary Schools and Blair Athol Kindergarten. The amalgamation of these three sites, founded our BANB7 community. BANB7 is a category one school, 59% of our families receive financial assistance for school fees, 59.9% of students are from non English speaking backgrounds, 12% are from Aboriginal backgrounds, 10.6% are identified as having a disability and we also deliver an Intensive English Literacy Course to students who have been in Australia for 12 months or less. BANB7 Children’s Centre provides a range of services for families and children from birth – 8 years including a Community Development Coordinator and a Family Services Coordinator. We are a diverse community of learners whose experiences vary greatly and whose expectations of education also vary.

It was widely agreed that many of the children and families from our community were not connected to education. It was neither meaningful, purposeful or connected to their life experiences. Therefore, we at BANB7 aim to provide a different learning journey for children and families.

What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies in us.
RALPH WALDO EMERSON
This has involved developing intervention systems based on our BANB7 Principles and Elements for Effective Learning, including:

- Emotional connections are critical if children are going to engage at an intellectual level.
- No two children are ready to learn the same thing at the same time, in the same way. Personalizing learning is essential by viewing learners as capable and building on their interests, prior knowledge and understandings.
- Making learning visible to a variety of audiences is an important part of the learning process.
- Children have one hundred languages and one hundred ways of thinking - Reggio Emilia
- Gen Z learners are digital natives and technology is an integral part of their expression, creativity and communication.
- Learning dispositions such as creativity, curiosity and persistence are fostered and are a criteria of success.
- Learning environments can act as a third teacher, offering provocation, explorations, creativity and construction.

Having a team around the child allows professionals to come together with combined and varied knowledge bases to share information and develop a strategic plan for supporting and moving forward. Often at these meetings a ‘key person’ is identified as already having involvement with or a relationship with that particular child or family. Through professional dialogue resources are allocated, further information gathering and intervention strategies are actioned and the group undertakes a collective, coherent response. From this larger team around the child, key professionals are identified as taking a lead role and coordinating services and supports for this child and family.

**Literacy Partners**

Throughout BANB7 literacy partners have been funded and implemented as a key part of intervention planning. At BANB7 we are continuously asking ourselves and reflecting on what it will take for every child to be literate? The waves of intervention form the basis of the literacy support model.

Research suggests that the most skilled person to offer support and intervention to children is the trained class teacher. Douglas Reeves states, “one of the most effective learning strategies is to have highly trained teachers work with the students most at risk.” Therefore, to ensure a higher delivery rate of targeted literacy teaching, literacy partners (trained teachers) are present during the literacy block across the junior primary and primary studios from 9.30am – 12.15pm. The fundamental difference in using trained teachers to deliver support is their ability to plan for discrete learning goals and the Australian Curriculum, ensuring children’s targeted intervention is not disconnected from every day learning. This minimizes withdrawal and maximizes integration. It also considerably reduces the adult child ratio during the literacy block. For example, in the junior primary studios children are part of a 1:10 group during literacy time four days a week.

The construction of the literacy block is based on the promise that ‘learning happens when there is an emotional connection and an opportunity to practice’ – Martin Westwell.

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**Team Around The Child**

At BANB7 we have taken on a ‘Team Around the Child’ approach to identifying children at risk and planning targeted intervention. This has evolved because we found that several people had small bits of information and various levels and types of involvement with children and families; there was a lot of information but it wasn’t coordinated so therefore was not maximizing the support available. The initial core team of 10 includes the Principal, Head of School Early Years, Head of School Primary, Special Rights Co coordinator, School Counsellor, Aboriginal Community Education Officer, Aboriginal Education Learning Advisor, IELC (Intensive English Language Coordinator), Community Development Officer, Family Support Coordinator and our Senior Leader, Director of Innovation Inclusivity and Intervention.

This team meets regularly, at least twice a term to identify children at risk, gather and share information and devise a plan for supporting children and families. The children discussed at these meetings are not limited to children with identified needs but children who for a variety of reasons are presenting as being at risk, not progressing academically, struggling to manage their behaviour or present as having social and emotional difficulties.
We recognize the importance of our Specialist Support Service Professionals including speech pathologists, psychologists, literacy consultants and occupational therapist. The role of the Learning Advisor is to integrate specialist knowledge with BANB7 pedagogy to plan and implement curriculum to engage children in learning. These small groups allow for a highly motivating, multi-sensory approach to explicit teaching around phonics, reading and writing. Children are involved in both small group, game based explicit teaching as well as hands on, project and play, which we call a time to practice.

Special Rights Partners, Learning through Project Groups:

In the afternoons, the literacy partners become part of the teaching teams within other neighbourhoods and work with smaller project groups to support our children with additional needs, as well as our ESL Learners and ATSI students. Having Support Learning Advisors as part of neighbourhood teaching teams allows support to be planned for and delivered by teachers who know the children and are able to adapt and scaffold the curriculum accordingly. Learning Advisors are able to be responsive and flexible to the needs of the children and the circumstances of any given day.

At BANB7 personal learning time and project based learning is valued as a means of creating real life, emotional connections with children’s interests and their learning opportunities is as well as providing children with an integrated curriculum.

Through project work and personal learning time, children are given opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills for a particular purpose, develop as researchers, build their dispositions for learning and work cooperatively in a group to achieve a shared outcome.

For children with additional learning needs, English learners and children with complex social and emotional needs, this can be an overwhelming task. Therefore identified children are supported during Personal Learning Time by being part of a small, teacher led project group where researching skills, organisation and persistence are highly scaffolded by a supportive and responsive Learning Advisor.

The children in these smaller project groups are further supported through guided reading sessions and oral literacy activities, focusing on decoding and comprehension, which are related to their project providing an ongoing integrated and intensive literacy program. Whilst explicit teaching strategies are used by learning advisors, these groups are child centered and responsive to the learners interests and needs, whilst following the learning intentions and subject areas in the Australian Curriculum.

These supported groups are continually evolving as we reflect on the children’s needs, teacher practice, current research and the outcomes for these individual children.

Occupational Therapy Lenses

At BANB7 we have an occupational therapist working with us two days a week. She is an integral part of our Children’s Centre team. The role is to help build the capacity of staff and children to recognise sensory needs through the sharing of knowledge, professional development and team teaching, supporting staff to incorporate occupational therapy into their daily practice as a means of getting children’s bodies organised for learning.

The literacy groups are sometimes attended by our Occupational Therapist who supports Learning Advisors to incorporate an alertness program into transition times. Movement breaks, heavy work and breathing exercises are all incorporated into the literacy block. This is part of an ongoing project at BANB7 where we aim to embed these occupational therapy practices into daily teaching and learning opportunities.

Alongside whole studio education, two primary ‘Engine Room’ groups run three times a week, offering children opportunities to take part in small group sensory sessions aimed at improving students’ ability to recognise their sensory needs and develop strategies to self-regulate both independently and with adult support. The special rights coordinator and the school counsellor, under the guidance and support of the Occupational Therapist, run these two groups three times a week from 8.30am – 9.30am.

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In Summary

Recognising and responding to ‘the need to do things differently’ was the beginning of our learning journey at BANB7. It was Albert Einstein who defined insanity as “doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results”. At BANB7 we have drawn on contemporary research to inform how we go about constructing teaching and learning. It’s a work in progress and like all journeys we are navigating our route as we travel. Children belong first to a family, a cultural group, a neighbourhood and a wider community. (EYLF). We value what they bring to BANB7 and work in partnership to respond as a flexible, dynamic, supportive, professional learning community to provide children and families with the best opportunities.

Contact
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Special Rights Learning Advisor
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Building confidence in supporting students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Elizabeth Special School has recently begun a lead role in the mentoring of staff in mainstream sites in the Northern Adelaide Region in regards to working with students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other complex needs.

Elizabeth Special School (together with Mark Oliphant College) applied for a National Partnerships grant to support staff capacity building in teaching and supporting students with ASD. As part of this funding, sites in the region were surveyed and staff indicated that they wanted more opportunities to engage in professional learning. The information came from all levels of schooling, preschool to secondary school, and from staff including leaders, teachers, SSO’s and ECW’s seeking involvement.

As a result in 2013, Elizabeth Special School is providing a professional learning program for any staff from any northern region site free of charge after school hours. All staff registered in this learning program will access resources, contribute to learning and build confidence in their skills.

Our program statement of purpose:

Students with Autism, Spectrum Disorder in Northern Adelaide Region sites will achieve improved learning outcomes, higher engagement in learning and wellbeing as a result of more confident and informed teaching practices.

Our first session was held early in Term 2, for staff representatives from sites making decisions and providing suggestions of topics for future sessions. All staff involved completed a perception data survey, answering questions about their confidence levels in working with students with ASD. Perception data survey will be completed after all sessions, with the results hopefully showing an increase in staff confidence and ability to work with students with ASD. A timetable of sessions was emailed to all sites and staff could book in to attend. Over 170 staff from 56 sites have shown an interest in attending one or more sessions. We have already facilitated 2 sessions, with attendance numbers of more than 80 teachers and leaders in each session.

Sessions topics for Term 2 and Term 3 include:

- Managing Challenging Behaviour
- Student work habits, attitudes and skills
- Communication strategies for non-verbal students
- NEP writing and SMARTAR goal setting
- iPads for learning
- Visuals for students with ASD
- Special class/unit discussion and sharing opportunity

A Facebook group was created to enable discussions and resource sharing. It is also providing a great opportunity for people to network and share experiences with other staff in similar circumstances.

The high level of interest that has been received so far has clearly demonstrated the importance and need for this type of professional learning. Feedback from staff has indicated that the sessions already run were relative, informative, fun and most of all, enjoyable. Leaders have informed us that the sessions have promoted ongoing discussion between staff when they have returned to their sites.

Staff have already begun implementing ideas and strategies that they have learnt during these sessions and they have posed specific questions to the presenters that reflect their eagerness to improve outcomes for students with ASD. As a facilitator of these sessions, I have noticed that staff involved are developing a real sense of openness and are willing to share their experiences with others. We are all learning from and with each other and we are also seeing other sites and key staff sharing in some leadership of this group.

Alison Kennedy
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COMPLEX NEEDS - NEW CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES: A KILPARRIN PERSPECTIVE

Kilparrin is located at Park Holme and provides on-site pre-school and school programs and a Statewide Support Service for children and learners with complex sensory impairments (vision impairment and/or hearing impairment) and additional disabilities. Most Kilparrin teachers have a postgraduate degree in Vision Impairment and/or Hearing Impairment and this is now considered a prerequisite for teachers working at Kilparrin. To support and deliver an exemplary service to the young people with whom we work, Kilparrin must be at the forefront of current research, pedagogical practice, teaching and learning. The Kilparrin school culture is unashamedly focussed on academic achievement for all children and learners. There exists a strong alignment of translating theory into practice and making learning authentic for each child and learner. Being able to ‘walk the talk’ is a strong component of teaching and learning at Kilparrin. All teachers demonstrate an intimate knowledge of the learning needs of each learner, and the professional expertise to engage them with the various curricula; the Early Years Learning Framework, Australian Curriculum and SACE as appropriate, and the capacity to assess their learning growth.

To develop a facilitative relationship with the children we must be responsive. The pedagogical role of the educator is to facilitate children’s understandings of themselves and their world rather than to impose preconceived concepts on them. This will empower children to drive their own learning (Lambert & Clyde 2000). Curricular adjustments are framed on the basis of detailed knowledge of each child and learner’s strengths and abilities rather than a deficit model and can only be attained through rigorous planning, teaching, reflection and assessment. Assessment at Kilparrin is a comprehensive systematic process of gathering educationally relevant information from a variety of sources. The following strategies and innovations have been implemented at Kilparrin in response to the challenges each child with complex needs brings to their learning environment.

One of the three strategic directions in the Kilparrin Site Improvement Plan is Literacy and Communication. The Kilparrin journey began in 2003. Alison McWilliams, Kilparrin Principal was instrumental with ensuring all children were provided with personalised learning programs and teachers were rigorous and effective with the delivery of their programs. Due to current research, innovative practice and the need to be proactive, Alison strategically sourced specialists working in the area of Vision and/or Hearing Impairment and additional disabilities and organised for Kilparrin staff to begin a journey of innovative learning together.

In 2003 a training day in all aspects of communication support at Kilparrin was led by Speech Pathologists from the Education Department, NOVITA, Disability SA, and Autism SA., all of whom were supporting Kilparrin learners. In the years following Dr Dolly Bhargava (Paediatric Speech Pathologist) held a similar training session. Dolly introduced us to Personal Communication Dictionaries (PCDs) and visual schedules. This term we have modified the PCD’s to ensure they meet the very specific and individualised communication plan for each Kilparrin learner. Sharon Barrey Grassick shared information about communication with babies and children born with both Vision and Hearing Impairment. Sharon is world renowned for the excellence of her work in deafblind communication and early intervention. As an early intervention service, Kilparrin endorse the premise that early learning is important and cannot be left to chance.

- young children’s programs must be tailored to meet their individual needs
- early stimulation and experiences support the development of vision and hearing skills that form a basis for lifelong learning
- parent support for their child’s program is considered a crucial factor in its success
- working with families to understand the child’s communication skills and needs is critical

Dr Mark Barber contributed information about Intensive Interaction. This is a program to promote communication for learners who are at the pre-intentional level of communication. In 2010, I attended the AGOSCI Winter Literacy Intensive which was a scholarship won through SERU, and Alison attended the Principals as Literacy Leaders with the expectation that schools would develop a whole school literacy approach. And so our journey with a whole school literacy approach developed. So far, Kilparrin’s literacy development has taken ten years. However, it has been a journey as a learning community, personalising learning and actively engaging the children, the learners, all staff and parents.

Over the years, many attempts have been made to address the most appropriate communication mode or AAC for children and learners at Kilparrin who have a Vision Impairment and/or Hearing Impairment and additional disabilities. One of the most powerful tools available to AAC users is literacy. It allows AAC users to demonstrate often otherwise hidden competencies and to communicate freely what they are thinking. (D. Koppenhaver, 1992, Literacy Issues Related to AAC Intervention).

Jane Farrall has been the Educator in Residence for the past two and a half years and has facilitated the implementation of the Four Blocks Literacy framework at Kilparrin. All Kilparrin learners have been assessed and have an identified and consistent mode of communication.

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In many cases this is the first time that the learner has been able to have a voice. One of the first important milestones for early communicators is the ability to say ‘No’. It is important for children to indicate preferences whatever they may be. At Kilparrin we understand that no one person will be the interpreter of the learners’ communication and we need to assign meaning to a response. When a choice is offered whether it is ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ it is acted upon and respected as a valuable choice and opinion for that learner. Providing the learner with the opportunity to have a voice is the beginning of the development of a positive self-concept. For some learners they have very little control over their environment and to be able to indicate ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ is a choice we provide and acknowledge.

Jane provided us with a very useful blog link which further explores the importance of ‘NO’.

Take a look!  http://praacticalaac.org/praactical/aint-no-stopping-us-now

Janelle Sampson has been working with the Kilparrin community (staff and parents) to provide Professional Development around the implementation of Pragmatically Organised Dynamic Display (PODD) communication books as a communication tool. The PODD book is a sophisticated support for developing communication. The teachers and staff at Kilparrin have been instrumental in implementing the use of PODDs fluently in all areas of the curriculum. Opportunities in staff meetings and our Afternoon Tea’s With a Purpose to practice using the PODD communication books has been a fun and manageable way to learn together. On reflection, Four Blocks and PODD have been complimentary interventions and they have been instrumental in transforming our literacy practices and the learning and development of all children and learners at Kilparrin School and in the Early Intervention Service. Our learners have so much more to say and it is our responsibility as educators to provide the opportunities, to model how to communicate and provide time for the children and learners to get it right as well as to get it wrong. Sometimes it is the ‘getting it wrong’ that supports the learning!

Regardless of the ability of the children and the learners we teach we need to be relentless in our own learning, pedagogy and practice.

The children we support in early intervention and the learners at school all present with unique strengths and qualities and deserve the optimum quality of education every day. The Kilparrin teachers believe in all children’s capacities to succeed regardless of diverse circumstances and abilities. A lively culture of professional enquiry is ongoing at Kilparrin as we strive to find equitable and effective ways to ensure all children and learners engage in their own learning and have opportunities to achieve learning outcomes.

References:
Sampson, J (2012). Reflections and Experiences of using PODD (Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display) Communication Books with Older Children and Adults. janelle@twowaystreet.net.au
Part Two

“No student is too anything to be able to read and write”
-David Yoder, DJI-Ablenet Literacy Lecture, ISAAC 2000

This quote by David Yoder is a phrase that continues to be an inspiration for literacy instruction in my classroom. Jane Farrall first introduced me to this quote in 2011 when she entered our school, Kilparrin Teaching and Assessment School and Services, to support us on our journey to successful literacy instruction.

Jane Farrall supported the staff at Kilparrin in implementing the Four Blocks Literacy Framework for children with disabilities (Erikson, K. & Koppenhaver, D. 2007). We were interested and excited about having a whole school literacy approach and Jane seemed to have the answer to our problems of finding one that would suit our learners. I was particularly excited. I teach the senior class at Kilparrin which consists of six learners with sensory impairments (vision and/or hearing) and additional disabilities. All six of my learners have complex communication needs and 3 learners are working towards completing their SACE (South Australian Certificate of Education).

The idea of having a structured and functional literacy program was very exciting but I, as well as other teachers within the school, was hit with a roadblock before I even started. It seemed that a majority of our learners did not have a consistent way to indicate ‘yes’ or ‘no’ and had no formal communication system. As a teacher I felt extremely guilty of denying my learners their basic right of expressing themselves. Indicating ‘yes’ or ‘no’ is something that we often take for granted but is something we do every day. How did this happen? So, to make it up to my learners I worked collaboratively with Jane to determine the best way for my learners to get their message across. Jane worked in class with me, the SSOs and of course the learners. Videos were taken along with copious amounts of notes and photos and eventually each learner had a plan for indicating ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Carrying out the plan for each individual learner was another matter as I was teaching 13 – 18 year olds to break old habits for showing ‘yes’ or ‘no’ (crying, screaming and other such behaviours) and trying to instill in them the power to have a voice that other people will want to listen to. For a majority of my learners this meant looking in the direction of symbols on their tray and this is what proved difficult. Did they really mean it? Were they really saying yes and no? To be honest no they did not mean it and no they weren’t really saying yes or no, at first!

But they were learning and I was teaching them and I was not giving up! Eventually the learners started to realise the power of saying ‘yes’ and ‘no’ and we were getting consistent results. This meant that we could then move on to introducing formal communication systems.

PODDs (Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Displays) were introduced to all the learners in the class. As the teacher, I too was wearing a group PODD to deliver curriculum content. With the combination of the learners being able to indicate ‘yes’ and ‘no’ and with each of them having a PODD, the difference in my classroom was unimaginable. The learners were no longer crying, screaming or exhibiting inappropriate behaviours. They all had a voice!! They were able to express themselves and it was empowering for them to be able to do so.

Now that we had formal communication systems delivering the Four Blocks to my class was inspiring as my learners could now participate in literacy lessons and provide answers on their own without forced choice or their behaviours being interpreted by others. The learners could choose what they wanted to write about and could ask questions. It was a whole new class environment and the results also showed after the learners were tested. Some of my learners even moved from emergent level of literacy to pre-conventional.

Our journey with the Four Blocks and with communication is far from over. Every day I learn something new about communication from my learners. At the moment it feels like my learners are teaching me, they have shown me what they are capable of and where they can go with their learning and I plan to move forward with them on this journey. As well as the quote by David Yoder another quote stands strong in my heart and that is:

“Just because I can’t talk, does not mean I don’t have anything to say” and my learners have definitely proven this to me and I have witnessed it firsthand.

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Beccy Hayes
Teacher
P 82775999
This book is about teaching rather than about disabilities. Many of the concepts presented are about processes such as adapting curriculum to meet individual needs, planning teaching strategies, encouraging positive interactions and working collaboratively. The first part provides an overview of concepts, principles, legislation and policy related to inclusive practices. The second part examines effective teaching practices and the third part deals with specific difficulties in literacy, numeracy and communication.

Preschool Kindergarten Visual Activity Schedule Pack 1. 61.089.01.
This set of Boardmaker picture squares depict a variety of common activities and routines that occur in preschools and kindergartens. They can be used with learners requiring visual strategies to support their learning.

Index for Inclusion Developing Learning and Participation in Schools. Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education. 2006. 34.0374.02
This third revised and expanded edition comprises a book and CD to guide schools through a process to develop an inclusive school community. It provides strategies to review school culture, policies and practices. The review process identifies barriers to learning and participation and to determine priorities for planning and implementation.

This book raises awareness about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD’s) and associated difficulties. It provides a range of practical teaching and learning strategies from which educators may construct individualised learning plans. It also: explains the impact that FASDs can have on a child's brain; discusses the overlapping and co existing disorders such as ADHD and Autism Spectrum Disorders; shows how to support and empower teachers; provides ready to use teaching resources and strategies that can be used directly in the classroom.

Differentiated Assessment Strategies: One Tool Doesn’t Fit All. Chapman, C. 2005. 34.0935.01.
In the resource the authors support the pedagogy that assessment must be ongoing, incorporated into the daily classroom program and differentiated to support individual learning styles. The last chapter offers strategies and tools that can be used by teachers.

Fulfilling the Promise of the Differentiated Classroom. Tomlinson, C. 2003. 34.0391.01.
In this book, Tomlinson uses real life examples to illustrate how teachers implement the three interdependent elements of the differentiated classroom: the individual needs of the student, the response of the teacher and the use of curriculum and instruction to address learners needs.

Differentiated Learning: Language and Literacy Projects that Address Diverse Classrooms. Paterson, K. 2005. 34.0375.01.
Differentiated learning uses constructivist pedagogy, inquiry learning and Bloom’s Taxonomy to demonstrate how teachers from kindergarten to year nine can create motivating and authentic language and literacy opportunities for students.

Improving Schools, Developing Inclusion. Ainscow, M et al. 2006.
This book uses research evidence to explore how the issue of more inclusive schools can be addressed. The authors look at existing assumptions about school improvement and educational reform. They propose that the development of inclusive practices will only be achieved by engaging in dialogue about the deeply held belief of teachers and policy makers.

This book features case studies of inclusion initiatives in English secondary schools. It illustrates the complex nature of the school development process, describes teacher’s attitudes towards inclusion and challenges the idea that there needs to be consensus among school staff for inclusion to work.

This book is as a guide for special educators and administrators to establish an effective and appropriate inclusion programme for Autism Spectrum Disorder students at a whole school level in the Early and Primary years of schooling. It also provides special education teachers, mainstream teachers and other adults working with these students with information, materials and strategies for including these students in the mainstream classroom.

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Information Pack. 2005. 09.0187.01.
This information pack contains materials related to fetal alcohol syndrome. The booklet Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Effects provides information designed to help professionals in their work with people whose lives have been effected by fetal alcohol exposure. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome : A Guide for Families and Communities includes topics such as; diagnosis, teratology and brain damage, physical and behavioural manifestations and education.

Inclusion: Developing an Effective Whole School Approach. Ekins, A. & Grimes, P. 2009. 34.0398.01.
This book examines and offers solutions to challenges faced by schools in ensuring that all students are enjoying, participating and achieving in education. The processes explored include: self-evaluation, data analysis, intervention planning, provision mapping and target setting. The Inclusion In Action Model demonstrates how these processes can be linked together to inform and impact upon whole school strategic planning.
This book summarises relevant information regarding a number of syndromes. The disabilities included are approached from a perspective of intervention and the book is not intended to be a definitive, extensive current review of medical research on causes. Syndromes covered include: Asperger’s, Angelman’s, Fetal Alcohol, Fetal Rubella, Fragile X, Landau-Kleffner, PradaWilli, Rhet’t, Selective Mutism, Tourette’s, Williams and Down Syndrome.

This book describes methods of support and intervention educators can use to create social inclusion in preschool and primary school. It employs classroom observations to illustrate recommended teaching strategies; explains a variety of strategies ranging from environmental arrangement, on the spot teaching to individually targeted interventions; describes common needs and intervention for learners experiencing particular challenges and disabilities; provides exercises at the end of each chapter.

Closing the Inclusion Gap: Special and Mainstream Schools Working in Partnership. Cheminais, R. 2003. 34.0226.01.
The author states that the future role of special schools as part of the progression towards inclusion is to act as “launch pads” for closer collaboration with mainstream schools. This book is designed to be used to organise and develop the consultancy role of special school staff and ensure inclusive practice is on track. Includes strategies and templates for monitoring and evaluation to market services to mainstream schools, to manage dual placement.

This book provides a focus both within the classroom and in most areas of the school environment regarding the inclusion of students with unusual behaviours into general education. Behaviours and suggested strategies include: Leaving the classroom without permission; Lack of focus in whole group instructions; Out of seat behavior; Difficulty completing independent work and Meltdowns.

Research clearly shows that individuals with autism spectrum disorders are visual learners. This book alerts readers to the fact that many students with ASD process their world differently and need visual information presented differently to facilitate their individual thinking and learning as not all visuals mean the same to all people.

Talkies Visualising and Verbalising for Oral Language Comprehension and Expression. Bell, N. &Bonetti, C. 2006. 61.1097.01.
Talkies is a program of instruction designed to develop the imagery language connection for young children or students with weak receptive and expressive oral language skills, including those on the autism spectrum. The goal of the program is to bring mental imagery to a conscious level and to connect that imagery to language, forming the basis of language comprehension and expression.

This handbook, designed to help develop and advance visual strategy knowledge in the areas of routines, learning and behavior, builds on the foundational information presented in the first handbook (66.1105.01). It acknowledges that visual strategies are a component of best teaching practice. The resource includes help for self management tasks such as making a bed or preparing a timetable. It helps organise ideas for academic assignments or recording agreed class roles.

This book provides professionals working with young learners with developmental disabilities, with a range of educational programs. It expands upon the inclusion approach to promote successful learning environments for learners with developmental disabilities. It includes recommendations for application, as well as a problem solving framework for dealing with challenging behavior.

What is Visual Literacy DVD. Moline, S. 2008. 36.0264.02.
In this presentation, intended as an in-service workshop, Steve Moline presents the basic elements of visual literacy and its place in the curriculum by presenting classroom sequences with students and workshop sessions with teachers.

In this book, the author shows teachers how to engage reluctant students in literacy by extending their own traditional understandings of literacy and repertoire of teaching strategies, to include the reality of student literacy outside the classroom and the tools students currently use for it. Particular attention is paid to visual literacy.

This book, providing visual language strategies for individuals with autism Spectrum Disorders, is divided into three sections. It discusses how individuals with ASD learn, how learning language affects social behavioural and academic development and language based learning strategies and interventions for the visual brain.
Secondary school transition for children with special educational needs: a literature review
Hughes, L.A., Banks, P and Terras, M.
Support for Learning
Vol 28, No. 1
This article reviews the literature exploring the impact of transition (on the concerns) and psychosocial adjustment of children with special education needs in comparison to typically developing children. The results of the review indicated that further research is needed in all areas of psychosocial functioning at transition, and research to identify groups of children at particular risk.

The interface of the national Australian curriculum and the pre-Year 1 class in school: Exploring tensions
Petriwskyj, A, O’Gorman, L and Turunen, T.
Australasian Journal of Early Childhood
Vol. 38, No 1
This article discusses the questions raised about the purpose of the pre-Year 1 Foundation Year that is part of the national school curriculum. A document analysis across three Australian states examines three constructions of the pre-Year 1 and tensions coming from varied perspectives. The results of this analysis indicate that since 2012 there has been a move in constructions of the pre-Year 1 class towards school based ideologies.

Using Systematic Instruction and Graphic Organisers to Teach Science Concepts to Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Intellectual Disability
Knight, V.F. PhD, Spooner, F. PhD, Browder, D.M. PhD, Smith, B.R. PhD and Wood, C.L. PhD
Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities
Vol. 28, No 2
This article looks at the challenge of science instruction requiring conceptual learning that can be difficult for students with ASD, especially if they also have an intellectual disability. Utilising a multiple probe design, three students with ASD and intellectual disability were taught various scientific concepts via systematic instruction including constant time delay and multiple exemplars of a teacher-directed Graphic Organiser. The outcome was a functional relation demonstrated between the Graphic Organiser with systematic instruction and students’ number of correct steps completed on the task analysis. Implications for practice and future research are also discussed.

Doabler, C. T. PhD, Fien, H.PhD.
Intervention in School and Clinic
Vol .48, No. 5
This article discusses how schools can deliver explicit mathematics instruction to students with mathematics difficulties. Research indicates that explicit mathematics instruction is one of the most effective instructional approaches for teaching students with or at risk for maths difficulties. The article provides a framework for delivering explicit maths instruction in the early grades. The focus is in the context of teaching place value concepts in kindergarten and first year classrooms, and the guidelines provided can be used to improve the quality of maths instruction. The article also makes reference to books and resources on explicit instruction.

See the Current Awareness supplement to order these articles and more.
The four authors of the Words Their Way program come from a background of teaching children as well as extensive involvement in research into the teaching of reading. It was during their research at the University of Virginia into student's 'invented' spelling that this group of researchers advanced a comprehensive developmental model for orthographic knowledge. Based on what the children's spelling inventions reveal about their understanding of how written words work, they devised an instructional model to support the development of children's spelling. The program Words Their Way was the result and was first published in 1996. It is now in its fifth edition.

Words Their Way uses a systematic sequential approach to phonics, vocabulary and spelling instruction, integrating all three areas into an interactive hands-on program for students through five stages of orthographic development. Student's learning is based on their level of understanding and then follows the developmental model through a specific pathway. This makes Words Their Way an inclusive program which differentiates instruction for different levels of word knowledge. It is designed to be part of a balanced literacy plan that includes fluency, comprehension and writing.

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development tells us that children cannot learn things they do not already know something about. Using informal observations of children's reading and writing and The Spelling Inventory in the Words Their Way program the teacher can determine what students already know, what they don't know and more significantly what they know a little bit about – or words they “use but confuse”. These are the words that tell the teacher what the students are ready to learn. The information gained is used to place each child along the developmental continuum, in one of five stages. The Words Their Way continuum closely matches the phonics continuum in the Literacy Secretariat stages of phonic development, but continues past the structural stage and covers more morphemic and derivational word study for advanced readers and spellers. The Words Their Way stages are:

- emergent,
- letter-name alphabetic spelling
- within word pattern
- syllables and affixes
- derivational relations.

Assessment of orthographic knowledge

The development of reading, writing and spelling are all inter-related and all three advance in stages that share important conceptual dimensions. This means that informally observing students' literacy behaviours provides a wealth of information for planning of instruction. By observing reading and writing and analysing the errors teachers can gain invaluable insight into the students' word knowledge. Words Their Way also provides a spelling inventory, which consists of lists of words that are at increasing levels of difficulty for the students to write. The students' attempts at spelling the words in the inventory are analysed to identify the level of development of the students' word knowledge.

Teaching Word Knowledge

The traditional way of teaching spelling is to give students lists of words to learn and then test those words at regular times. However, this method does not promote the development of spelling skills, because the test is only a test of memory, not one of understanding. It has been shown that children who do well in a test do not use the same words in their writing – they are only memorising long enough to complete the test. Words Their Way uses word sorts for students to engage with words in a more meaningful active way – it teaches children how to spell not what to spell. Children are given words to cut up and then sort into groups according to their sounds, patterns or meaning. By comparing and contrasting word features, they discover consistencies and so construct an understanding of how words work.
The Words Their Way core book contains many examples of games and activities for word study, but the process of sorting words or pictures into categories is the foundation of the program. Teachers ‘stack the deck’ and create tasks that focus students’ attention on critical contrasts from which they can form generalisations. Students examine, manipulate and categorise words in an active process of word study. Instruction is scaffolded carefully from the highest level of support in a teacher-directed sort and then moving along the continuum to guess my category and finally to the least support in a student-centred open sort.

Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary and Spelling Instruction is the core text and the program can be implemented from that book alone. Each stage of development has a chapter which explains the teaching of orthographies at that level and then extensive activities are provided at the end of each chapter. However there are other supporting books including Words Their Way with Struggling Readers: Word study for reading, vocabulary, and spelling instruction, Grades 4-12 and Words Their Way for English Language Learners. Each developmental level has a companion workbook which contains word sorts ready-made for classroom use – they simply need to be photocopied and then students cut them into individual words and start sorting. Also available is an Australian supplement DVD which has revised spelling stages and word lists to reflect Australian pronunciation, shows links to Australian curriculum: English and provides digital word sort activities for use on interactive whiteboards and has other supporting materials.

SERU has some of the Words Their Way resources:

- 36030201 Words Their Way Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary and Spelling Instruction
- 36030401 Words Their Way with Struggling Readers Grades 4-12
- 63336705 Words Their Way Letter and Picture Sorts for Emergent Spellers
- 63336704 Words Their Way Word Sorts for Letter Name Alphabetic Spellers
- 63336703 Words Their Way Word Sorts for Within Word Pattern Spellers
- 63336701 Words Their Way Word Sorts for Syllables and Affixes Spellers

The authors of the Words Their Way program state ten principles of word study instruction. They are:

1. **Look for what students use but confuse.** Analyse students invented spelling and focus instruction on those features of words that students are confusing rather than those they totally neglect.
2. **A step backward is a step forward.** Begin word study activities where students will experience success. Contrast something new with something that is known.
3. **Use words students can read.** It is easier for students to look across words for a pattern when they are words they can easily pronounce.
4. **Compare words “that do” with words “that don’t”.** What something is, is also defined by what it isn’t.
5. **Sort by sound and sight.** Both sound and visual patterns are integrated into students’ orthographic knowledge.
6. **Begin with obvious contrasts.** Move from general gross differences to more specific discriminations.
7. **Don’t hide exceptions.** With generalisations there are always exceptions, so make a category of ‘oddball’ for the irregular words.
8. **Avoid rules.** Memorising rules is not the way children make sense of how words work. By structuring the categorisation tasks to make patterns explicit, students get into the habit of looking at words and seeking the consistencies, rather than trying to remember rules.
9. **Work for automaticity.** Acquiring automaticity in sorting and recognising orthographic patterns leads to the fluency necessary for proficient reading.
10. **Return to meaningful texts.** After word sorting, students hunt for words in texts that also fit the pattern. By doing this they extend their analysis to more words and transfer their new knowledge of words into their reading.
Abilipad

The previous edition of the SERUpdate showcased Clicker Sentences and Clicker Docs – two apps which have a range of assistive features to support students with the writing process. This edition of SERUpdate showcases a similar writing tool. Like the Clicker apps, Abilipad is designed to support students with the writing process. It is a highly adaptive writing tool with the unique feature of the ability to create any number of customised keyboards. Keys can be created that contain individual or a combination of letters, words, phrases, images and audio recordings. The keys can be merged together to make larger keys and different colours can also be used for the keyboard background, keys and letters.

This flexibility in keyboard design allows educators to design an interface that can positively affect the success of students with cognitive functioning difficulties. The built-in keyboard editor is highly intuitive and the creation of customised keyboards is straightforward. The screenshot below shows a keyboard containing images, text and audio recordings. Using labelled pictures helps to link word-picture associations and provides a more direct way to interact with literacy conventions. This particular activity has four linked pages in the Notepad. Students simply swipe to the next page and use the same keyboard to construct their sentence.

In Abilipad, there is also the ability to create a set of linked keyboards where students can swipe back and forth to access required keys. The screenshots below show a series of linked keyboards that have fewer but larger keys. Students simply swipe back and forth between this series of keyboards to access particular keys. This approach reduces distraction and working memory demands and increases success rates for students who are cognitively challenged. This linked keyboards feature allows for the design and creation of a series of keyboards for specific language activities, literacy activities such as letter knowledge or phonics, social stories, word banks, picture banks, writing frames, sentence building activities and, as the screenshot below shows, a linked set of keyboards with onset and rime activities.

continued
Linked keyboards could also be used to design an AAC system for expressive communication purposes.

The developers of Abilipad allow created keyboards to be shared or downloaded. This can be done from within the app or from their web site.

Abilipad’s minimalist appearance of the writing space is also supported with word prediction capabilities and a text to speech function. The function can be set to speak individual letters. This is a really useful feature for students with complex learning needs. This highly customisable app falls in to the category of Universal Design. It offers extensive flexibility and ease of use, the ability to display perceptible information, low tolerance for error and low physical/motor demands. It is an ideal writing platform that provides access to literacy for a wide range of learners.

Extensive information including video tutorials can be accessed at http://appytherapy.com/.

**NEW RESOURCES**

**Sandwich Four Layer Puzzle.** Tuzzles. 85.0701.01

This wooden sandwich puzzle, containing four layers of fillings which are interchangeable, can be used for problem solving, visual discrimination, health and fine motor skills development.

**Achieve! Personal Development Healthy Lifestyles.** Osborne, E. & Yates, S. 2009. 66.1539.01

This book and CD provide a range of activities examining healthy and unhealthy lifestyles, with a focus on the early teenage years. It provides additional activities for students who have difficulties with literacy in years 7-10 and have a reading age of six to nine years.

**From Anxiety to Meltdown.** Lipsky, D. 2011. 19.0160.01

Anxiety is one of the difficulties experienced by people on the autism spectrum, and is often caused by things such as changes in routine, or sensory overload. The book contains real life examples to explain how people with autism think and details the difference between meltdowns and tantrums, and how to identify triggers and prevent outbursts from happening in the first place.

**Social Stories for Kids In Conflict.** Ling, J. 2010. 66.1537.01

This practical book can be used by those who work with young people with Autism, Asperger syndrome and related conditions such as Tourettes and ADHD.

It provides sets of dialogues to highlight difficulties and possible changes in behaviour, examples of cartoon and other visual techniques, social stories, and a PowerPoint presentation that can be used to introduce the ideas in the book.

**Adapted Zambie the Elephant.** Technical Solutions. 2008. 81.1612.01

This switch operated elephant when activated moves forward, makes an elephant call and moves both the trunk and ears. The sound and movement occurs for 35 seconds and then has to be reactivated by the switch.

*This is a restricted loan item for use with children/students with severe multiple disabilities.*

**INCLUSIVE TECHNOLOGIES SERVICE UPDATE**

The Inclusive Technologies Service offers a range of professional learning opportunities which can be delivered at SERU or at sites. These can be presentations or hands-on workshops. Interested sites need to lodge the service’s Request for PD form found at http://web.seru.sa.edu.au/Workshops.htm. The request form has been updated to reflect the increasing range of workshops on offer.

The Inclusive Technologies has a change in staff this term. We thank Melissa Campbell for her valued contribution to the service and wish her well in her return to Modbury Special School. We would like to welcome Hayley Sparshott to the team.
Rex Jones Press To Explore Set 1. Zucker, J. 2009. 63.3381.01
This pack of high interest low vocabulary readers and Teachers Guide has four titles from the Rex Jones Series. The titles in this series have an interest level of 9-14 years and are at a 6.5–7 year old reading level. The Teaching Guide contains ideas and activities for each of the books in the series.

GirlzRock Set 1 Reading Age 7-10. Mullins, J. et al. 2005. 63.3362.01
This pack of five books from the high interest low vocabulary series GirlzRock, are suitable for learners with a reading age of seven to ten years.

At Work Beginner. Werston, F. 2010. 66.1511.01
This work book contains reproducible pages to assist students to understand workplace practices and develop the language and numeracy they need at work. It includes an audio CD of recordings to support extra practice. Spoken and written activities help students develop the language, literacy and numeracy skills they will need to participate.

Adapted Snail. Technical Solutions. 81.1609.01
This switch adapted musical snail, when activated, lights up and can play one of sixteen nursery rhymes. This is a restricted loan item for use with children/students with severe multiple disabilities.

Sensory Feet. Wilkins International. 80.0398.01
These colourful sensory feet can be used to provide tactile experiences. Each foot has one smooth side and one bumpy side and can encourage exploration, feeling and touching. 
See also 80.0398.02 Sensory Hands

This resource is a comprehensive curriculum to foster social and emotional awareness, enhance psychological wellbeing and promote academic success. It is informed by current research in the fields of cognitive neuroscience, mindful education, social and emotional learning, positive psychology and evidence based teaching practices.

Money Management 1 Banking. Kovacs, H. 2009. 64.1559.01
This book provides a range of activity blackline masters to teach the skills of maintaining a bank account, completing applications and choosing the right account. Basic literacy and numeracy skills can be improved through these activities, making them suitable for students who have difficulty with regular curriculum materials.

Achieve! Life Skills Careers and Economic Understanding. Osbourne, E. & Yates, S. 2010. 66.1539.02
This book and CD is for secondary students in years 7-10 who have low-level literacy skills, reading age of 6-9 years, and need modified activities to participate in the curriculum. There are a range of tasks that will assist students in understanding issues to do with jobs, careers and business in the twenty-first century.

A Literature Companion for Teachers. McDonald, L. 2013. 36.0305.01
This book is a reference book for teachers who want to explore literature with their students. The book, based on the Australian Curriculum: English’s Literature strand and sequence, presents criteria tables, suggested guided discussion questions and outlines suggested teaching tasks.

Dandelion Launchers Unit 9b-10d. Reis-Frankfort, T. 2010. 63.3374.05
This is a series of phonic reading books, designed to be used as supplementary reading resources that support a phonics program. They can be used for individual or group reading, and suitable for beginner readers, learners who need individual support and learners with learning difficulties. See also: 63.3374.07.01 Unit 13b -15d; 63.3374.06.01 Unit 11b -12d; 63.3374.03.01 Unit 5b -6d.

Sensory Ball Pack 2. Educational Experience. 80.0376.02
These brightly coloured tactile and auditory sensory balls can stimulate the sense of touch and are often helpful when a child is required to sit and listen.
Learn Number and Count. Plan Education. 2010. 64.1556.01
This pack is facilitate concrete understanding of numbers and quantities. Learners can stack beads on the wood bases to count, create and solve simple mathematical problems and practice simple addition and subtraction. The counting beads can also be used for sorting activities.

Functional Curriculum for Elementary and Secondary Students with Special Needs. Wehman, P. & Kregal, J. 2012. 34.0950.01
This third edition outlines a broad conceptual framework of functionality for children and adolescents with disabilities. The book describes how to build a functional curriculum for students, with the aim of making the student more competent and independent.

Talisman 1 Series books 1-10. Ries-Frankfort, T. 2009. 63.33760.01
This series of books are designed for older pupils who need to learn the Phonic Code to progress in their reading. The books introduce the vowel sounds and alternative spellings. The workbook is based on the stories and includes activities which teach and consolidate an understanding of phonics. See also 36.3376.02 Talisman Series 2

Success and Dyslexia. Firth, N. & Frydenberg, E. 2011. 18.0234.01
This is an evidence based program designed to assist upper primary students with dyslexia to increase their ability to take control of and cope well with the problems that occur in their lives. Underpinned by cognitive behavioural principles and recent coping and learning disabilities research, the book focuses on three skills areas; awareness and strengthening of current coping methods; challenging self defeating thoughts; assertion skills to discover needs and ask appropriately for support. The accompanying CD contains interviews, role plays, resources and web links as well as handouts for classroom use.

Runway Series Set 1. West, J. 2009. 63.3382.01
This pack contains five titles and a Teachers Guide for the Runway high interest low vocabulary series. This series was designed to provide stories in a variety of genres for girls and the books have been written for girls aged 9–14 with reading ages of between 7–8 years old.
The Teaching Guide contains a four page section of ideas and activities for each of the books in the series. See also: 633.3382.02.01 Runway Series Set 2.

Phonics Flipper 3. Smarterkids. 2001. 63.3254.03
Phonics Flipper 3 is a stand up /fold down board that has 3 sets of attached cards. The cards on the left hand side of the flipper have pictures that can be spelt out by flipping the cards to the right. The learner can sound out the word and then flip the two cards to the right with the letters that show the word.

Star Quest Book Pack. Merrick, D. & Close, K. 2012. 63.3387.01
This pack contains books and a teachers guide and a CD, which provides high interest low vocabulary adventures for students with a reading age of 6-7. The Teachers Guide provides three photocopiable worksheets for each of the books to reinforce comprehension, spelling, writing and grammar skills.
The CD provides developmentally sequenced literacy games in the five key areas crucial for successful reading; phonics, word structure, sight words, vocabulary and comprehension.

Creating Meaningful Inquiry Inclusive Classrooms. Jones, P. et al. 2012. 34.0949.01
This title provides educators with ways to engage in a wide range of educational research and explores its value to the practice of teaching and learning. It introduces the Accessible Research Cycle (ARC) as a framework for classroom and school based inquiry for educators.

In this book, the author shares common sense approaches to toilet training children with autism and related disorders.

Creative Shape Set. Plan Education. 82.0653.01
This manipulative resource can assist in improving fine motor skills. The coloured rubber pegs can be placed in one of the wooden boards to create a range of shapes and the coloured laces can be used to thread through the boards to make various shapes.

Felt Creations Pirate. Hurricane Toys. 2007. 61.1027.04
This is a language based interactive resource where players arrange the felt pieces to construct stories. Adults can interact with the child to place pieces as story starters or extend the story being developed. It can be used for story telling, developing vocabulary, basic spatial concepts and for playing barrier games.
Practical Ideas that really Work for Secondary Students in Inclusive Classrooms. McConnell, K. & Ryser, G. 2007. 34.0948.01
For educators and other school based professionals to assist secondary students in general education classrooms, who have mild to moderate disabilities. Accompanying the book is an evaluation form, with a rating scale and ideas matrix, which is a criterion referenced screening assessment that identifies a student’s academic problem area before, during and after instruction.

Life Skill readers is a photo illustrated reading comprehension program featuring contemporary life skill themes suitable for learners of post school transition age with a reading level at second grade or lower. The Student Reader has a corresponding PDF and software that reads the stories aloud. The software also includes many other features including text highlighting, word definitions, testing and a management system. The program presents 40 stories in six content areas: Community, Personal, school, Signs, Transportation and Work. Stories describe places, things and social situations that the students will encounter as they transition into adult life.

Social Rules for Kids. Diamond, S. 2011. 66.1532.01
This book has 100 social rules for home, school and the community. It provides simple easy to follow rules covering topics such as body language, manners, feelings, and more. This book aims to make students lives easy and more successful by outlining specific ways to interact with others on a daily basis.

Roly Poly Diffraction Mirror. Eduplay. 81.1595.01
When this push or pull mirror is rolled, the encased beads tumble and make a noise. It has six bright diffraction panels and two mirror discs mounted at each end of the cylinder for visual attention. This resource may help increase a child’s hand eye coordination, build concentration and assist in improving tactile and gross motor skills.

This book provides an approach for developing basic self help skills, addressing eating, toileting, dressing and personal hygiene. The skills are broken into small steps and taught using individualized and systemic instruction. The techniques are suitable for toddlers through to teens, with a diagnosis anywhere on the autism spectrum.

Magnetic Play Book at the Market. Tiger Tribe. 61.1107.04
This set is suitable for learners three and over and contains magnets replicating items found at the market. It can be used to assist in the development of imagination, independent play, fine motor skills, vocabulary, expressive/receptive language and concepts.

Living and Work Literacy 5 From School to Work. Parker, B. 2009. 66.1540.01
This book, part of the Living and Work Literacy series provides photocopiable activities that explore the world of work and is suitable for learners in years seven to ten. It focusses on the transition from school to work, with suggestions for applying for a job, preparing for interviews, writing a CV. Work sheet topics also include filling in application forms, OH&S and more.

Visual Maths Addition Set. Larkey, S. 64.1567.01
This set of magnetic maths cards and template is designed to teach visual maths addition to learners on the Autism Spectrum. Teaching addition often needs to be very visual for learners on the Spectrum is also includes a set of instructions for a direct teaching programme.

Aspergirls Empowering Females with Asperger Syndrome. Simone, R. 2010. 19.0163.01
The author, who herself has Asperger’s, states that girls are less frequently diagnosed than boys, and even once symptoms have been recognised, help is often not readily available. The image of coping well presented by AS females of any age can often mask difficulties, deficits, challenges, and loneliness.

This book focuses on the role of sensory perceptual problems in Autism as identified by individuals with Autism. The first section covers unusual sensory perceptual experiences and sensitivities. The second section looks at assessment and intervention with recommendations on selecting appropriate methods and techniques to eliminate the problems and enhance strengths.

Social Savvy Help you Child Fit in with Others. Perterson, L. 2008. 66.1538.01
In Social savvy: Help your child fit in with others, the author discusses how parents and carers can manage difficult situations without reacting impulsively to children’s behaviour. This book offers information on: helping children to make friends; improving parent child relationships; dealing with misbehaviour.
SERU Mini Expo’s in Regional Areas

Planning is underway to introduce Mini Expos in country areas in 2014. In Term 3 a ‘trial’ Mini Expo will be held in Port Lincoln.

The Inclusive Technology Service, Communication Support Service and Teaching and Learning Service will all be offering a range of workshops for educators and families.

Developmental Learning Centre (DLC) Upgrade

An exciting upgrade of the Developmental Learning Centre, formerly (toy library) is about to take place. Resources have been culled, new resources purchased and updated contemporary shelving will replace the current 20 year old shelving currently in place. New resources will reflect a focus on increasing the number of specialised resources eg switch adapted.

Assessment Review

A review of the SERU Assessment collection is currently underway. Allan Lloyd-Jones (DECD psychologist) provided two very informative sessions for staff on assessments, and a task group has been identified to begin the review.

We would like to hear from teachers of students with disabilities in Special Schools and Special Classes about what assessments they are using. Please contact Dymphna James 8235 2871
dymphna.james@seru.sa.edu.au

Saturday Openings

The Resource Centre will be open for borrowing on the following dates, with a teacher on duty to assist with your enquiries.

- 10 August 2013  9:00am - 12:00pm
- 31 August 2013  9:00am - 12:00pm

2013 Special Education Expo

The 10th Special Education Expo was held from 8 - 9 July with 467 attendees from 298 locations attending 58 workshops over the three days. This year workshops were convened in 3 locations - Adelaide West Special Education Centre, The Special Education Resource Unit and EDC. The Expo opened with an all day workshop at AdWest on Monday 8 July.

Jane Farrell (consultant to schools across Australia and overseas) presented an all day workshop entitled “Literacy for all: Blocks for Literacy Success”. On Tuesday 9 July SERU hosted workshops on iPad technology and Inclusive Learning Resources. On Tuesday and Wednesday a range of workshops were scheduled at EDC with participants able to select workshops on iPad technology, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, sensory processing and modulation difficulties, puppets for learning, apps for speech and language, managing classroom attention, activity and behaviour, dyslexia and the Australian Curriculum to mention just a few.

Anecdotal feedback from participants indicates that the Expo was much valued and the wide range of topics were relevant to the needs of parents, special educators, teachers, SSOs and service providers. Now the task of analysing feedback and suggestions from participants is occurring to inform future PD events convened by SERU.

To assist with future planning of the Expo it is vital that we have your feedback. A survey is now available on the SERU website for you to complete http://web.seru.sa.edu.au. Please provide us with your thoughts, as this will inform our planning for 2014 and ensure we are meeting your professional development needs.

SERU and the Expo Committee would like to thank the presenters for their high quality practical, relevant and current information across a broad range of topics. We would also like to thank all the people who have supported and attended the Special Education Expo, the Special Education Expo Committee and the volunteers who supported the committee and the Adelaide West Special Education Centre.
The SERUpdate relies on the willingness of DECD personnel to contribute articles. Feedback from readers confirms that contributions from sites are a valuable way of keeping informed with what is happening at other schools.

Third edition 2013: Secondary Schools - Students with disabilities and learning difficulties

In this edition we would like to explore the range of strategies, general school or specific intervention programs and initiatives educators in mainstream settings are utilizing with students with disabilities and learning difficulties. Examples of suggested topics:

- Differentiating the curriculum to meet the needs of all students
- Australian curriculum/ general capabilities/ SACE
- Wellbeing – emotional/mental health/ social education / lifeskills
- Strategies for successful transition to secondary school
- Transition to work/ Vocational education
- Models of providing support eg learning centres/ in class support

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