Welcome to the final edition for 2013. This will also be the last publication of the SERUUpdate in its current format. We would like to thank staff from schools, universities, other agencies and other DECD services who have contributed articles in the past. Your willingness to share your expertise, initiatives, good practice, challenges and achievements has made the SERUUpdate a valued publication.

In this edition educators in secondary schools have been invited to write about how they provide support for students with disabilities. Teachers have written about strategies for transition, models for providing support and intervention, differentiation, wellbeing, oral language, strategies for transition and general school or specific intervention programs.

In the past the availability of resources which are relevant to older student with low reading ages has been minimal. Increasingly more of these high interest and age appropriate resources are becoming available, and SERU now has a wide range available for loan. Selected resources have been described in this edition.

National Partnerships More Support for Students With Disabilities recently hosted a conference in Adelaide, which brought Professor Barry Carpenter and colleagues to present: ‘Mental Health and Wellbeing, What Does it Mean for Students with a Disability’. As a follow-up an article has been included which while covering primary and secondary, reflects the issues teenagers have, and includes differentiation and models of support. See Pages 1-4.

Dymphna James
Assistant Manager

Manager’s Comment
I sincerely thank and commend Dymphna for her outstanding contribution to SERUUpdate over many years. I’m sure our readers have not only valued the articles and ‘special education’ information she has collated but also appreciated the changes to the format and presentation of this publication. Under her leadership and management SERUUpdate has changed from a ‘newsletter’ to a high quality publication showcasing current research, special education initiatives resources and more. It has been a much valued publication for our extensive mailing list and online readers.

Thankyou also to our Office Manager, Bronwyn Burgess, who has ensured a high quality design and layout for SERUUpdate.

And of course, a big thankyou to all our contributors! Without you SERUUpdate would never have happened.

Jan Kenney
Manager
## IN THIS ISSUE

### FOCUS ARTICLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing in Students with Disabilities: Understanding the Complexities Involved</td>
<td>Barry Coughlan and Barry Carpenter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>An Invisible Disability: Language Disorder in High School Students</td>
<td>Arran Stierman, Victor Harbor High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Language Disorder in Secondary school Settings: The Hidden Disability</td>
<td>Timothy Kittel, DECD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Post School Options and Beyond Expo in Clare</td>
<td>Paul MacLeod, DECD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Special Education Support at Adelaide High School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>School and Community Support for a Student with Autism</td>
<td>Deidre Chapman, Elliston Area School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>A Model of Support at Banksia Park International High School</td>
<td>Sandra Niscioli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Oral Language Difficulties in Adolescents</td>
<td>Carol Edwards &amp; Jill Bailes, SERU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Charles Campbell Special Education Overview</td>
<td>Mary Zillante</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Le Fevre High Secondary Special Class - Journey of Four Years</td>
<td>Greg Cashel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>The Learning Centre in a Nutshell</td>
<td>Tash Morath, Glossop High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>How Can Community Studies be used to Support Students with Special Needs Gain Their SACE</td>
<td>Renie Walker, Mitcham Girls High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Supporting Adolescent Girls on the Autism Spectrum in Mainstream Schooling</td>
<td>Pam Jacobs, Flinders University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Nuriootpa High School - Literacy in Junior High School for Students Between Mainstream Classes and the Disability Unit</td>
<td>Peter Temme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Now and Next Transition Planning Program in the Riverland</td>
<td>Rosemary Sandow, Riverland Special School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>How to Support Students with ASD in the Secondary Setting</td>
<td>Niki Welz, Autism SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Developing the Learning Mind: Turning your Mind Off and Being Calm</td>
<td>Simon Fuller, Para Hills High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>An Integrated Services Project: Young People in Residential Care and SERU</td>
<td>Dymphna James, Anne Creighton-Arnold &amp; Kerry Papadopoulos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### REGULAR FEATURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Resources Related to the Topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Spotlight on SERU Journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Inclusive Learning Technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Spotlight on SERU Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>New Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Upcoming Events</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING IN STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: UNDERSTANDING THE COMPLEXITIES INVOLVED.

Abstract
Mental health difficulties in students and young people with complex learning difficulties and disabilities (CLDD) present a significant range of challenges to educators, families, and clinicians. One of the most significant concerns is that these mental health difficulties frequently go unrecognized for long periods of time, and early detection is problematic. Where early detection occurs, outcomes are generally more positive for students, and this can have a very significant impact upon quality of life, for the individual student and their family. Accurate and detailed assessment is a key factor in developing appropriate evidence-based intervention strategies tailored to the individual needs of the student. Emotional resilience and coping strategies are vital to developing and maintaining good mental health. Continued Professional Development (CPD) and training for staff is key in terms of recognizing symptomatology, prevention of ill health, and promoting positive outcomes for students. The present paper seeks to address a range of critical issues pertaining to the emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of students with CLDD, from both an educational and clinical practice perspective.

Introduction
The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines mental health as: “a state of wellbeing in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community” (WHO, 2007).

Mental health issues frequently present in several different ways and it is important to recognize that we all have mental health needs. It is important to distinguish between a mental health problem, a mental health disorder and mental illness, so that appropriate assessment, diagnosis and intervention can take place. This is critical in terms of the overall quality of life for those with mental health difficulties, as frequently these problems go unrecognized for long periods of time. Unfortunately in many young people with intellectual disability or those presenting with complex needs, their mental health difficulties have gone unnoticed for long periods of time, and they have not been able to avail of timely assessment and appropriate intervention. Clearly our “early warning systems” for these vulnerable populations (Coughlan, 2011) are not fully developed, and we need to refine these in order to engage at a much earlier stage in the development of these difficulties.

The UN Convention of the rights of the Child, Article 24, notes that “health is the basis for a good quality of life, and mental health is of overriding importance in this”.

Within the general population, it is suggested that approximately 20% of children have a “diagnosable” mental health difficulty in any given year (Mental Health Foundation, 2007), while in the UK, the Office for National Statistics (2004) suggests that one in ten of all children and young people between the ages of 5 and 16 have a mental health difficulty, which can include anxiety, depression, conduct disorder and emotional disorder. The Good Childhood Report (2012) highlighted that 9% of young people in the UK were “not happy” with their lives, while 4% of children aged eight years had low wellbeing, compared to 14% of those aged 15 years.

A very recent report published in the UK – Alone with my Thoughts (2013) states that “poor mental health among young people remains one of the last great medical taboos” … and notes that … “three children in every classroom suffer from a diagnosable mental health problem, with thousands more teetering on the brink” (p.3). This report goes on to state that: one in five young people (20%) have symptoms of depression, almost one third stated that they have attempted to end their own life, 29% stated that they self harmed because they felt down, 12% of young people stated that they felt down or depressed nearly everyday in the last few weeks, 12% noted that they felt like they were a failure nearly everyday when they were under 16.

The Scale of the Problem: Mental Health as a “Complex Need”

“These children here are fragile. They spill out and demand you hold them together. Their self-esteem is so low that they seem to have no defences against anything they find threatening. Teaching on a knife-edge is not easy” Bergistra. The Guardian, 30 October 2012.

Clearly the mental health and emotional wellbeing of our young people is at risk, as recent findings have highlighted. If we turn our attention to young people with intellectual disabilities and complex needs, the findings are even more concerning: 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” (Carpenter et al., 2011, p.3)

The international findings in relation to the prevalence of mental health difficulties in students and young people with disabilities are stark – evidence-based research suggests that the current prevalence rate is between 40% and 60%, and this may be an under-estimate. Within the UK, of the 1.7 million young people with special educational needs, it is thought that half of them will present with some form of mental health difficulty (Madden, 2011).

Emerson in 2003 noted that children with an intellectual disability were over seven times more likely to have a diagnosed mental health problem than their non-intellectually disabled peers. Not only this, but the co-existence of more than one mental health difficulty was common, with 50% of Emerson’s study population having more than one diagnosis. This finding was also emphasized in the Complex Learning Difficulties & Disabilities Research Project (Carpenter et al., 2011) which stated that “mental health is the most pervasive and co-occurring need to compound and complicate children’s special educational needs and disabilities”, (p.9).

In a follow-up study, Emerson and Hatton (2007) found that these children are far more likely than their peers to have to contend with the consequences of socio–economic disadvantage. In particular, their research reveals that of the children with complex needs who have mental health problems:
53% live in poverty (compared with 30% of all children).
48% have been exposed to two or more adverse life events such as homelessness, harassment or abuse (compared with 24% of all children).
38% live in families in which no adult is in paid employment (compared with 7% of all children).
44% are supported by a mother who is likely to have a mental health problem (compared with 24% of all children).

This latter point is echoed in the research of Pretis and Dimova (2008) who report that over 3 million children in the European Union live with a parent with a mental health problem. They focus on building the emotional resilience of these children, a concept also widely advocated in the “Count Us In” report (FPLD, 2002). As Pretis & Dimova (2008) state “fostering resilience in children of mentally ill parents is like finding pieces of a scattered puzzle -- but it is worth investing in support for these children as they can create a meaningful picture.” (p.158)

How do we begin to make sense of these Mental Health Difficulties?

Teachers play a vital role in making sense of “complex” behaviours within the classroom setting. In the case of possible underlying mental health difficulties, it is often necessary to engage with other professionals such as psychologists, psychiatrists and other mental health team members. These professionals utilize a range of classification frameworks and assessment tools, which guide both the assessment and diagnostic process. These frameworks include the IASSID Bio-Psych-Social model of Understanding (SIRG-MH, 2000), the DSM-IV (Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th edition; American Psychiatric Association, 1994), the ICD-10 (International Classification of Mental Diseases, 10th edition; World Health Organisation), and more recently the DC-LD (Diagnostic Criteria for Psychiatric Disorders for use with Adults with Learning Disabilities; Royal College Of Psychiatrists, 2001).

The role of the classroom staff in this process cannot be emphasized enough, as observation of behaviours, based on classroom-based knowledge, and detailed functional analysis is key to our understanding of these complexities. Multi-disciplinary or indeed trans-disciplinary input is vital in terms of positive outcomes for the child, and a partnership model is key. Developing a profile of the individual child’s need based on such observation, academic ability and attainment, in conjunction with specific psychological testing, where appropriate, is the cornerstone of good evidence based practice, which in turn leads to the formulation of specific goals for intervention.

The following questions are useful in attempting to make sense of the unusual or “atypical” behaviours that we often observe in the classroom setting. These unusual behaviours are often challenging in nature (i.e. they present as challenging behaviour), but frequently these behaviours may be related to the symptoms of an underlying mental health difficulty. On this point, Coughlan (2011) notes that “we have invested far too much time looking at the “challenging” component of the behaviour, rather than exploring what might underlie such behaviours” (p.69). Useful questions include:

- What specific behaviours (or symptoms) are we observing?
- How does the student make sense of these behaviours?
- How do classroom staff make sense of these behaviours?
- What are others observing or saying about the behaviours?

continued
• Is the behaviour contextually specific?
• Is the behaviour developmentally appropriate?
• Is this first onset, or have we seen similar patterns before?

In order to answer the above questions, the classroom staff must engage in in-depth observations, and gather meaningful data in an attempt to make sense of these complex patterns of behaviours. By gathering such data, one is automatically generating an evidence-base on which to answer existing questions about complex behaviours but one is also generating further questions in an attempt to formulate or “piece together the jigsaw” of complexity. When this is complete, one can then refer back to the diagnostic frameworks, with the evidence gathered, and discuss further with the multi-disciplinary team, where appropriate.

What can be Done & Where to Next for Schools?

Each school and each teaching professional has a vital role to play in the promotion of emotional wellbeing in our young students. Bailey (2013) notes that “…all teachers of children with special educational needs or disabilities … are inadvertent agents of change in the promotion of the core aims to promote wellbeing in classrooms and the onus is on delivering better outcomes for our most vulnerable children” (p.11).

Emotional resilience is key to emotional wellbeing. Schools should focus on this as a vital component in the armour a child will need to face the life challenges ahead. What must it be like to live every day of childhood with a disability, a special need, a complex learning difficulty? To be an 8 year old boy with Autistic Spectrum (AS), arriving in the playground of your Primary school, eager to join in the games of your peers, but you cannot—you do not understand the rules of the game; what does that do for your self-confidence?

What must it be like to be a 15 year old young woman with Profound & Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD) whose every intimate care need must today be dealt with by another; what does that do for your self-image? To be a bright secondary aged pupil with Cerebral Palsy (CP), who after the introduction to the History lesson in your secondary school, eager to join in the games of your peers, but you cannot—you do not understand the rules of the game; what does that do for your self-esteem?

However, this cannot be tackled solely by schools. This level of complex need requires the contribution of a transdisciplinary team able to deliver multi-dimensional assessment which defines behavioural problems, development disorders and mental illness, and, through evidence-based intervention, promotes development and positive mental health in young people with a range of complex special needs and disabilities, (Dossetor, White & Whatson, 2011).

In a repeat report by NASS/NCERCC & NCB (2012) reported that hardly any schools, (in their survey), had developed curriculum materials for dealing with mental health or for teaching students about emotional well-being. Whilst only two schools in this study mentioned the use of Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials, the majority found them inappropriate for teaching children with special educational needs. There were case study examples of augmented programmes such as “Zippy's Friends” for use with children with autistic spectrum (Rowley & Cook, 2005), but most schools appeared to only have considered mental health issues as a peripheral part of a more general approach to health education within PSHE.

There is a major imperative for schools to seize the initiative around curriculum development in relation to the emotional wellbeing of their students with complex SEND. It is still too often the case that the mental health needs of young people with SEND go unnoticed until the problems are severe and entrenched, (Howlin, 1997). Indeed an initiative may bring benefits to a wider group of students in any school when considering the World Health Organisation’s estimate that 25% of children and adolescents have a mental health disorder (www.who.int). This has to be set against the broader prediction, (also from the World Health Organisation (MHF, 2012),) which estimates that depression will become the single greatest burden of disease in the world by 2030.

We must not underestimate the key role that relationships have to play in both indicating difficulties in the positive adjustment of a child’s mental health state, and the potential for a decline in that state. Indeed Dossetor (2012) cites the eminent child psychologist, Professor Sir Michael Rutter, who would often observe that poor peer relationships are the best measure of childhood adjustment, and the best predictor in childhood mental health problems. Dossetor (2012) goes on to state that "the quality of relationships in the context of a mental disorder has more effect than medical treatment." Teachers need to remind themselves that teaching is a relationship based profession. The ethos of the school, the atmosphere of the classroom, the dynamics of the group, all set the context for the relationships in which the vulnerable child with complex needs may identify how they are valued (or not) as a human being in that setting.

Conclusion

Mental health difficulties in students with disabilities are a significant barrier to learning, and frequently go unrecognized. Given the changing pattern of childhood disability, and the increasing complexity of need of many of these students, there is clearly a
need to develop innovative ways of supporting these students, their families and those involved in their care and education. Teachers and other professionals need to “fine-tune” their early warning systems, so that these difficulties can be picked up on much earlier, and proactive strategies rather than reactive ones can be initiated. Developing emotional resilience in our most vulnerable students is vital, and the development of wellbeing teams in schools is a critical first step in this process.

References


Bergistra (2012) "The children are fragile. They have no defences". The Guardian 30th October 2012


Dossetor D (2012) "How much do we value families and what input does this have on children with intellectual disability?" CHW School Link: Mental Health & Intellectual Disability Sydney: The Children's Hospital.


Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2004 Mental Health in Children & Young People in Great Britain. London: ONS.


Barry Coughlan
(Assistant Director of Clinical Psychology, University of Limerick, Ireland)

Barry Carpenter
(International Educational Consultant, UK)
When modifying curriculum it is important to keep in mind a framework of skills or effective learning tasks that must operate across all learning areas. In other words, to modify curriculum in a worthwhile way, effective learning strategies as well as content must be considered.


AN INVISIBLE DISABILITY: LANGUAGE DISORDER IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Victor Harbor High School’s Intervention and Support program is framed by the Department of Education and Child Development’s (DECD) statement that “Effective sites (…) acknowledge performance concerns and seek alternative solutions to achieve quality outcomes”.

The Wave Room is one ‘alternative solution’ at Victor Harbor High School and receives its name in reference to the three-tiered, or wave, approach outlined by the DIAF Effective Intervention and Support Model. The first wave teaching targets the majority of students and includes those successfully operating at the year level of their peers and the curriculum. This is commonly referred to as ‘the mainstream’. The third wave at VHHS is specialised teaching shaped by a modified program and is located within the school’s Disability Unit. The second wave of intervention is characterised as students who need additional support to achieve at a level consistent with their peer group, preferably in the form of a mainstream ‘C’ or better. The Wave Room caters for these students.

Since its inception in Term 1, 2013, the Wave Room provides supplemental instruction for mainstream students with a Negotiated Education Plan (NEP) and students who have been identified, through a rigorous process of academic data collection and teacher observations, to be operating below their peer group. The Wave Room develops and delivers a literacy-based targeted program. Consistent to this group are language-based difficulties, attention-based difficulties and/or executive function difficulties. Certain groups of students are prioritised in accessing the Wave Room. These include the NEP students and are supported through individual and small group lessons similar to that of their mainstream class. Students with learning difficulties (SLD) undergo the referral process and experience similar learning to the NEP students.

The Wave Room is located in the middle school years building within close proximity to Student Services. It is conveniently attached to the wider VHHS Intervention and Support program which consists of guidance counsellors, child psychologist, social worker and GP (DOC on Campus program). A seasonally adjusted graphic organiser welcomes the students of the Wave Room. The display is pleasing to the eye and is a teaching tool that encourages students to record learning visually. Desks are connected together for student collaboration and create opportunities for peer tutoring. A personal reward chart that tracks the students’ progression is displayed in the room. Students who exhibit the values of the Wave Room; willingness to learn, respect of oneself and others, and persistence are congratulated with a reward determined by them. Baroque tunes subtly play as background music and a lavender fragrance emanates from carefully positioned oil burners to distinguish this space as a unique sensory and learning experience that is accessed by wave 2 students four hours per week.

Know thy learner

Knowing the learner is an essential requirement for all Wave Room staff and is both a continuous process and an end product. The Wave Room staff consists of one full-time teacher (Intervention & Support Leader) and five part-time student support officers. Teachers with specific Literacy and Numeracy backgrounds are scheduled into the Wave Room for four lessons per week. Prior to engagement with the students, the Intervention and Support Leader undertakes the process of researching every student through collecting a variety of academic data:

- Naplan/Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading and Numeracy (PAT R),
- previous school reports (including those from primary schools); and
- reading of professional reports including those from Educational psychologists and Speech pathologists.

One of the major challenges from the very onset was to create and develop a tool which would incorporate all the integral data that allows the staff (both wave room and mainstream teachers) to “know” the wave 2 learner. We needed to locate all this data in a single resource. The result of this process is the establishment of A Student Literacy Profile (see below) with further diagnostic testing facilitated by wave room staff, if required, utilising the ‘Learning Assistance Model’ (NSW Dept. Ed.2009).

continued
STUDENT PROFILE - LITERACY

Name: Student Y
ID: 222222
Year: 8
Date: 14/8/13

DATA

Literacy Data - Overall Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 8</th>
<th></th>
<th>Year 9</th>
<th></th>
<th>Year 10</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test 1</td>
<td>Stanine</td>
<td>Test 1</td>
<td>Stanine</td>
<td>Test 1</td>
<td>Stanine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Test 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Test 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131</td>
<td>129.505</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>126.12</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>124.6852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Ave</td>
<td></td>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td></td>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naplan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spelling: Westwood (SAST) 39

Chronological Age: 13yrs 11mths
Spelling Age: 10yrs 9mths

Reading: MULTILIT (making up lost time in Literacy)

Primary: 1 _ _ _ _ _ _ 11 _ _ _ _ _ _ 12.6
Adult Independent

NEP STUDENT PROFILE - LITERACY

Name: Student X
ID: 111111
Year: 9
Date: 5/7/2013

DATA

Literacy Data - Overall Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 8</th>
<th></th>
<th>Year 9</th>
<th></th>
<th>Year 10</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test 1</td>
<td>Stanine</td>
<td>Test 1</td>
<td>Stanine</td>
<td>Test 1</td>
<td>Stanine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Test 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Test 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td>129.2</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>129.505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>128.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>135</td>
<td>126.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td>135</td>
<td>124.6852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td>138</td>
<td>131.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naplan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WECHSLER INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT TEST

Subtest/area title
Vocabulary: Below Average
Spelling: Average
Style: Below Average
Logical Sentences: Average
Sentence Combining: Below Average

Reading Skills
The assessment of Student X's reading comprehension also revealed that his reading speed and reading rate (i.e., combination of speed and accuracy) was significantly below average in comparison to his peers.
At a glance, information about the learner becomes apparent to all staff. These include spelling age, reading level, PAT R and NAPLAN results and most importantly, accommodations. Accommodations are specific pedagogical descriptions that provide the best learning outcomes for the students. The Profile provides these clues to mainstream teachers who teach the Wave 2 students in their classes. The accommodations are described as interactive instructions (how you teach), involving materials (resources you supply) and student performance (how to assess). This process results in an understanding of the student’s learning strengths and specific curriculum content that is challenging to them. The Profile is integral in designing the student’s targeted teaching program. The influential area of one’s self concept as a learner and their feelings toward learning is identified through the relationship between the student and Wave Room staff member. An awareness and understanding of the issues, both social and/or emotional, that may have an impact on their learning is vital in supporting students who attend the Wave Room. Our staff meets weekly to discuss the progress of each student.

Pick Up and Go Packs

Pick Up and Go packs are the resources that bridge the Wave Room and the mainstream student’s class. The packs are visual, interactive resources supported by direct Wave Room teacher instruction. The curriculum content of a Pick Up and Go pack is the outcome of a cooperative effort between mainstream teachers - who provide the subject topic’s content knowledge and intended learning outcomes - and the Intervention and Support Leader, who utilise this knowledge in the creation of individualised programs for the student. Pick Up and Go packs are shaped by the student’s data and
begins with the question: What do we expect ‘Student X’ to learn? Providing an answer to this loaded question formed another hurdle for the program. A formula was developed which incorporates information from 6 key areas:

- Australian Curriculum: Literacy Capability
- Unpacking the capability (linking to PAT R)
- Literacy Continuum
- Example/Rigour
- Prior Skills Needed
- Learning difficulty (limitation) of the student

This approach began with an unpacking phase where capabilities outlined in the Australian Curriculum Literacy Capability were linked to data identified in Progressive Achievement Tests in Reading (PAT R). A similar process was pursued with the Literacy Continuum Register and this data provided the answer to the question that was posed. The culmination of this approach is the development of another practical tool (contact Arran for an example of the Individual Learning Program) that condenses all the important literacy information toward shaping students’ individualised program.

The flexibility of the Pick up and Go pack provides opportunities for all learners: kinaesthetic, visual and auditory learners. For example, kinaesthetic learners are supported through hands-on activities with guided practical support. Visual students learn through the facilitation of studying the relationships between concepts and ideas in mind maps that create a picture of topic ‘connections’ for the learner. Packs geared for auditory learners are facilitated through clear instructions and directions by the Wave Room teacher. At present, Wave Room staff are developing several digital Pick Up and Go packs, where brief ‘to the point’ verbal cues regarding a task or required outcome are presented as a filmed tutorial. The explanation of a concept or skill can be accessed either individually or in a small group. The benefit of this approach is that the student can watch this repeatedly and at different times, until the intended outcome is met.

The tasks created for a Pick up and Go pack have the goal of locating the individual learner within Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development where students feel challenged academically by the tasks though affirmed that their efforts will lead to success.

**Working Memory**

The development of a students’ understanding of key topic concepts prior to mainstream classroom teaching is the focus that frames the students’ first interaction with the Pick Up and Go pack. Evidence shows that if a student with a learning difficulty is introduced to the ideas of the subject before they are taught with their peers, then when this knowledge is re-introduced in the mainstream setting, their working memory is activated. This creates an optimum cognitive state for learning to occur as:

*working memory has the function of assisting knowledge to be retained through controlling the attention of the student; keeping them focussed and on task; and resistant to distractions. Working memory supports the student to organise knowledge and remember what is required of them (Gathercole & Alloway 2007).*

A student with poor working memory finds activities such as holding in mind information (new learning content) to be written down while doing something that is challenging for them for example, spelling the individual words in the sentence, very stressful. To overcome this, the very first Pick Up and Go packs familiarises students with the language of a new topic so that this does not slow down their rate of learning. This particular pack must be facilitated at least 1 week prior to the introduction of the new topic in their mainstream class. The goal of this approach is to lay the foundations for the working memory of the student to make connections when the learner hears these concepts again. This ongoing approach requires constant and precise communication between Wave Room staff and mainstream teachers.

The teaching and learning of essential topic concepts occur through a process of ‘chunking’ big ideas into smaller parts; and scaffolding the student toward a deeper understanding of the intended learning. The education psychologist Benjamin Bloom’s (1913-1999) taxonomy of learning domains is an integral guide in this process. In the wave room the first three rungs of this model: knowledge, comprehension and application are the foundation to our programs. Our initial activities encourage the knowing or recalling a definition of a term. This is followed by comprehending or explaining the term in the student’s own words. Finally, more challenging activities allow the student to apply the term or concept in a new context. We use Bloom’s Taxonomy as a visual aid to explicitly show students where the task they are participating in sits on the diagram. Furthermore, Bloom’s Taxonomy shows how their knowledge is progressing towards higher levels of thinking.

**The Wave Room and RMIT**

In Semester two of this year the Wave Room is working with the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology within the ‘Reframing Mathematical Futures’ research program. This research aims to improve student outcomes by transitioning students from additive to multiplicative thinking. Multiplicative thinking is indicated by a capacity to work flexibly with the concepts, strategies and representations of multiplication (and division) as they occur in a wide range of contexts (Di Siemon 2012)
For example: 3 bags of sweets, 3 sweets in each bag. How many sweets altogether?

This program is an exciting opportunity for Victor Harbor’s Wave Room students as they address the challenges of numeration (place value), meaning for the operations (concepts) and mental strategies (number facts) through hands-on interactive activities while making a valuable contribution to research in this area for Australian schools.

Where to next?

The next phase as Intervention and Support Leader has begun by modelling some of the Wave Room practices of interactive, group orientated and differentiated teaching within the mainstream setting. An integral goal in every NEP review meeting this year has been a pledge to observe the facilitation of the Student Literacy Profile throughout the schooling years and into adulthood.

LANGUAGE DISORDER IN SECONDARY SCHOOL SETTINGS: THE HIDDEN DISABILITY

At this very moment, around 1.1 million Australians have difficulty communicating. That’s almost 5% of our entire population.

People with Language Disorder (LD) have deficits in their ability to understand and/or use spoken words, gestures and/or written text. LD can affect people at a word level (vocabulary), sentence level (ability to understand and use grammatical structures) and/or a narrative level (being able to understand or tell a coherent story). LD forms a component of many diagnoses such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Hearing Impairment or Intellectual Disability; but it also frequently presents as a primary difficulty. When LD presents without other diagnoses it is often also referred to as ‘Specific Language Impairment’ (SLI).

LD is often evident from a very early age, and around 20% of 4 year old children have difficulty understanding and using language. The impact these difficulties have on literacy acquisition cannot be underestimated. The link between impaired communication and poor literacy development is well documented in the literature. As a result, the majority of speech pathology services in educational settings worldwide focus on preschool and the junior primary years. However, while the onset of language disorder frequently becomes evident during a child’s early years, its effects can continue to present throughout the schooling years and into adulthood.

What happens to adolescents in our secondary school settings who continue to have difficulty understanding and using language to the same extent as their peers?

Identifying secondary students with language disorder

Having a language disorder means that communicating with others is difficult. Students with LD often:

- Are monosyllabic
- Give non-specific responses to questions
- Are reluctant to read and write
- Cannot elaborate on the short responses they give
- Do not engage in narrative style conversations
- Give poor eye contact and are socially unaware of their body language and posture
- Become quickly verbally aggressive and abusive if they perceive pressure is put on them to communicate

In the early primary years, a teacher who witnesses these behaviours will often discuss this type of student with special education contacts, a psychologist or speech pathologist. However, this becomes more complicated when these behaviours are witnessed in secondary school settings.

For many adolescents, these behaviours are interpreted by adults as ‘growing pains’, rather than signals that a student has an underlying language disorder.

What sets apart the language disordered adolescent from those typically developing is that when in trouble young people can rapidly switch from the presentation in the dot-points described above into much more erudite individuals. When the chips are down and the consequences of being a good communicator becomes vitally important (such as when a student risks detention or a loss of privileges), adolescents become able to tell their side of their story with much more effective ways of communication. They are able to change their body language, make well-considered arguments, and describe a sequence of events from their own perspective. They can also understand others’ stories and challenge alternative points of view rather adroitly. Students with a LD simply cannot switch their presentation as easily; they do not have the

‘Accommodations’ within the mainstream class. With a school wide commitment to frank and fearless teacher observation and post observation conversations this will ensure that optimal student outcomes are achieved. Victor Harbor High School is dedicated to supporting students with learning difficulties.

Arran Stierman
Intervention and Support Leader
Victor Harbour High School
Ph 85511900

References

Di Siemon From additive to multiplicative thinking- the big challenge of the middle years

---

continued
prerequisite abilities to formulate and deliver a coherent and respectful argument in the same manner. As a result, students with language disorder are often branded as having challenging or ‘delinquent’ behaviours. Brownlie et al (2004) reported that boys in particular who presented with LD at the age of 5 years are later rated by their parents as having significantly more delinquent behaviours at 19 years than parents of boys who had language ability in the average range.

Supporting this claim, and using local data, a random sample of 68 DECD students diagnosed with SLI between preschool and Year 2 revealed that 28 were later referred to ‘Interagency Behaviour Support Co-ordinators’. This means that during their upper primary or high school years these students had exhibited behaviours sufficiently extreme enough to warrant risk of suspension or exclusion.

That’s 41% of this population and a staggering, predictive marker of challenging behaviour. When we consider that 2 out of 5 students identified with language difficulties in their preschool or junior primary years go on to develop behaviours in their adolescent years so challenging that they risk being suspended from school, it is clear that we need to be thinking about how we identify, engage and work with these students throughout their entire educational experience.

However, this disturbing trend continues; with 13 of the 39 students diagnosed with ‘mild’ or ‘moderate’ language difficulties also riskling suspension or exclusion in secondary settings (33%). Although these students had less apparent difficulties with communication in the early years, one in three later developed behaviours to the same extent that their school placement was in jeopardy. Language Disorder is not something that is easily outgrown, and as academic demand increases with more complex language in later years (much of this language presented in text format), so too does the pressure put on students with language disorder.

Identifying students with SLI in their secondary schooling years is not a simple matter. Wetherell et al. (2007) analysed two types of stories told by 13-15 year olds with specific language impairment, comparing these with similarly aged peers without communication difficulties. In free conversation ("Tell me about someone who annoys you..."), little difference between groups in terms of the length of the stories they generated, the diversity of vocabulary or grammatical structures selected. However, the opposite was true when the task involved constructing a narrative based upon a pictured sequence of events. In this case, students with SLI made substantially more errors than their peers, and needed much higher levels of support or prompting to generate a coherent narrative.

This distinction between the nature of these story tasks is quite significant. When adolescents with language disorder have control over the content of their conversations, they are able to produce spoken language that sounds similar to those of their peers. However, their difficulties with language become much more apparent when the content needs to be quite specific (in the case of retelling a specific sequence of events, or writing a report). Stumbling over details, not providing a logical sequence of events, or not being able to adequately describe the internal states of others are often interpreted by others as lies or untruths. When we consider that the first thing asked of a student suspected of transgressing school rules is “Tell me what happened”, it is perhaps unsurprising that students with LD are often not believed, or unable to justify their actions in a fluent manner.

Students with language disorder therefore ‘hide’ very effectively amongst their peers. In general and everyday conversation they may appear quite capable, but their difficulties with understanding of language or putting forward their point of view in a coherent and socially appropriate manner get in their way of responding to the curriculum. As a result, students with language disorder may present as:
- Lazy, inattentive
- Easily distracted or withdrawn
- The class clown
- Disruptive
- Disorganised and forgetful, never handing in assessments

All of these presentations may mask an underlying language difficulty. And if this difficulty is not addressed, the behaviour cannot shift. This is not a behavioural choice; this is symptomology of language disorder.

The challenging behaviours exhibited by students with LD persist beyond educational settings in a marked and sobering manner. In a landmark study Snow and Powell (2011) completed formal assessments of 100 young people in a juvenile justice setting. Within this population, 46 presented with severe and significant language disorders. There was also a high correspondence between young people with language disorders and those who had committed offences involving violence. This makes an intrinsic sense: people who have difficulty understanding or using language live in a perpetual state of anxiety, engaging their “fight or flight” reflex. In classrooms, ‘fight’ is not an option, and ‘fighting’ often takes the form of physical violence rather than verbal sparring.

The Office of the Children’s Commissioner’s 2012 report on the prevalence of neurodevelopmental disorders indicated that while 5-7% of young people in the general population have communication disorders, this prevalence rate increases to 60-90% of young people held in custody. It is clear what
happens when students’ behaviours are taken at face value, and the reasons underlying their behaviours are not adequately investigated.

**What can be done?**

The most important thing to be aware of is that secondary students with language disorder cannot be their own advocates. Often students are unaware that they have specific language impairments. Time needs to be given to students to be able to “tell their side of the story”, and often a neutral advocate with a background in special education is needed to investigate the reasons why students had difficulty in particular scenarios or responding to coursework.

While students often cannot tell their own story, their school files often do. An extended history of not handing in assignments, being sent out of class for not following instructions, or speaking inappropriately sometimes suggests that a student has a language disorder rather than has been willfully disruptive. A large red flag would be a psycho-educational or speech pathology assessment report indicating difficulties with verbal ability back in the ‘learning to read’ period of schooling but these are all too often buried at the back of a school file bulging with past reports, NAPLAN results and detention slips.

Students with LD benefit from being taught general strategies to respond to curriculum demands, rather than ‘therapy’. Being taught how to organise their diaries effectively, with lists of materials that they need for each lesson is invaluable. Students with LD find it difficult to categorise and store homework, particularly on laptops and it can be difficult to find folders saved in the wrong place and with a misspelled or cryptic label.

Students with LD often struggle with larger tasks involving planning and do not hand in personal projects. Breaking down larger projects into smaller chunks, and ensuring that students check back in regularly for advice and further direction gives earlier signs when students have misunderstood the nature of the task at hand.

Promisingly, many secondary sites are engaging in discussions around speech, language and communication needs both internally and with the various supports from outside schools. In some, students with identified language impairment are being sent out of the classroom; not for behaviour management, but for curriculum support with special education teachers. Starting in 2014, and as part of the National Partnerships – More Support for Students with Disabilities initiative, online training will become available for all DECD teachers in the ‘Inclusion of Students with Speech, Language and Communication Needs’ giving accreditation and the opportunities for more discussions with colleagues and reflection on the needs of this group. For more information on this initiative, contact Kerry Parsons (Project Officer, Online Training) on (08) 8226 9853.

Arguably Language Disorder is a ‘hidden’ disability, but its impact is far from invisible. In terms of pure and cold economics, one estimate considers the cost of a juvenile offender with language disorder to be around $270,000. The social cost however is arguably greater, with individuals unaware of their difficulties and labelled as “challengingly behaved”. Whilst intervention during a student’s first years in educational settings is more likely to have a lasting positive impact on language and developing literacy, we must not forget language disability still affects 1 in 20 students and plan accordingly.

**References**


Factsheet_Communication_Impairment_in_Australia.pdf


**Timothy Kittel**

Principal Speech Pathologist, DECD.

Ph 8226 9900

With thanks to the leadership, staff and students of Seaford 6-12, Wirreanda High and Eastern Fleurieu R-12.
This article describes the development of a successful annual expo that has been held at the Clare Town Hall for the last three years. The event has been highly successful for students, teachers, families and services alike. It serves as an example of what can be achieved in country areas to help support young people with disabilities and learning difficulties access available relevant services and gain better awareness of their post school options.

In 2010, an interagency meeting was held at Balaklava in which Kelly Grzywacz, a Developmental Educator from the Disability SA’s Clare office, first proposed what would become the Post School Options & Beyond Expo. Throughout 2011 Industry Skills Manager Neil Kuhlman and myself held a series of Interagency Post School Option Forums at DECD’s Yorke and Mid North Clare Regional Office. At the first of these the Expo steering committee was formed.

This committee quickly developed a real sense of synergy. The aim was clear The Post School Options and Beyond Expo is specifically targeted to anyone aged 15 and older who may need further support in gaining employment, accessing further education, independent lifestyle and leisure activities.’ Identified students 15 years and older from local secondary schools and their families were invited. Many Disability SA clients were also invited. The expos have hosted between 100 and 200 people at each event with 30-40 service providers and other guests.

Adele Agars, from Barossa Lower North Futures, brought a depth of relevant experience to the original steering committee having coordinated a similar, but larger employment expo in the Barossa. Adele produced timetables and checklists and accessed resources including funding from a range of sources. She quickly became a driving force. The success of the first expo has meant that the format has not changed much in the subsequent expos. Kelly Grzywacz has taken over from Adele as the coordinator of the committee.

Interagency networking has been well facilitated by the expo and the working relationships formed through participation in the steering committee have had an invaluable flow on effect into other areas of the members’ work.

Special Needs Coordinators in Secondary schools from the Mid North have also played a critical role in each expo. They have been particularly important in the process of identifying and inviting students who may benefit from attending. Rebekah Holland, from Clare High School, was on the original steering committee. Riverton District High School, Balaklava High School, Burra Community School and Eudunda Area School also participate.

Coordinators, such as Assistant Principal Sue Ryan from Burra CS, like to stress to students that it is not a ‘disability’ event but rather a place where you can find lots of different supports and options for when you leave school.

In 2013, special needs coordinators were shown a short PowerPoint presentation which explained who might be invited and the purpose of the expo.

The expo brings together a host of local service providers including Disability Employment Services, Tertiary and University representatives, a range of DECD supports (including: support services; Aboriginal Community Education Officer, ICAN, Industry Skills Managers, Trade Schools for the Future), Day Option providers such as SCOSA and other options such as the disability arts groups Superstars and Impromptu choir. Here are the colour coded categories:

VET to Work Pathways
Further Education
Apprenticeships and Traineeships
Employment Service Providers (DES)
Supported Employment
Day Option Program

Each expo has begun with a performance by Impromptu Choir, a choir for everyone including those with disabilities and mental health difficulties. Guest speakers have included John Hughes, a man with cerebral palsy who is well known as a winemaker and a contestant on Masterchef, and Steve Werfel, also a winemaker who has paraplegia and an insatiable thirst for all that life can offer. The mayor, local members of Parliament, council CEO, Aboriginal Community Education Officer George Laughton and Regional Manager of Support Services, Kathy Meredith, have attended.

Free sausages with the Apex/Lions Club cooking and door prizes of $50 sports store vouchers help add a sense of excitement and anticipation to the night. Feedback from all three events has been fantastic. Both stall holders and invited guests report high levels of satisfaction with the event.

continued
Mary O’Donnell has been a special educator for 40 years and has recently retired. Mary talked to us about her experience at Adelaide High School, and how students with disabilities are supported.

The Learning Support Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the Centre for Hearing Impaired, Special Education, Gifted and Talented and the Library. At AHS there are approximately 25 students with disabilities who have NEP’s. All students are included in mainstream classes, and additional optional support is provided. This support, a Line of Support (eg. it may be held on a LOTE line), is located in the library. Students identified with learning difficulties often join the students with NEP’s in these classes. Alternatively, support can be provided to a student with learning difficulties in maths or science classes by a trained SSO or Learning Support Coordinator which allows them to monitor the students understanding of the lessons. Support can be short or long term depending on the needs of the student.

The transition of students into secondary school is a well planned process. Following notification by the primary schools of students who will be starting AHS, the Coordinator visits the schools to attend NEP meetings and discuss student needs and accommodations before the student starts high school. The primary students then visit AHS, and meet their future Pastoral Care group teachers. When the year begins, formal lessons start late in Week 1, giving students time to settle in and become familiar with their new surroundings. A camp for year 8’s and a range of induction activities are held in the first few days. Pastoral Care groups have two teachers, so that students who experience difficulty with the transition are well supported.

The Coordinator and SSO provide support in classes, particularly maths and science. Peer support and cross age tutoring programs are also implemented. One strategy used at AHS is a one page sheet which provides an overview of the NEP. It provides brief information about the students disability (for example - physical difficulties and the impact these have on accessing the curriculum), succinct dot pointed strategies to help learning and confidence, and a general comment from the Coordinator.

Another way teachers are informed about students is on Day Map. Day Map is a software program used by AHS to provide current information to staff, students and parents, with each group having different access capabilities. Through Day Map teachers are also informed about students with disabilities and learning difficulties, student reports and attendance. It also includes homework, a daily bulletin, reports, attendance rolls etc.

The Learning Support Coordinator regularly meets with all teachers who have students with disabilities in their classes to assist with modifying curriculum, ensuring there is more guided practice and more explicit teaching. All students in the class do the same topic, and the curriculum is adjusted to be explicit and describable – all students have to be successful! A modified program is provided for each subject by the coordinator and literacy teaching is embedded in the work that students bring to the support classes. If students have learning difficulties they may receive short-term support.

Post school planning includes:

- Daws Road and Prospect Centre for SACE subjects

Sponsor Listing
- Geoff Brock, Member for Frome;
- Clare & Gilbert Valleys Council;
- Barossa Lower North Futures;
- Department for Communities & Social Inclusion;
- Department for Education & Child Development;
- Uniting Care Wesley Country SA – Youth Connections;
- Statewide Group Training (SA) Inc;
- Regional Development Australia – Skills for All;
- National Disability Coordination Officer;
- Steve Griffiths, Member for Goyder;
- Nick Champion, Member for Wakefield;
- Interwork;
- Rotary Club of Clare;
- Apex.

Paul Macleod
Disability Coordinator, DECD
Ph 8842 6650

At the time of writing the steering committee has just confirmed that this event will be held again in 2014.

For more information please contact me by email paul.macleod@sa.gov.au, particularly if you are interested in running a similar event. I have listed our sponsors (below) as a possible starting point for funding and resources.

Sponsor Listing
- Geoff Brock, Member for Frome;
- Clare & Gilbert Valleys Council;
- Barossa Lower North Futures;
- Department for Communities & Social Inclusion;
- Department for Education & Child Development;
- Uniting Care Wesley Country SA – Youth Connections;
- Statewide Group Training (SA) Inc;
- Regional Development Australia – Skills for All;
- National Disability Coordination Officer;
- Steve Griffiths, Member for Goyder;
- Nick Champion, Member for Wakefield;
- Interwork;
- Rotary Club of Clare;
- Apex.
Elliston is located on the west coast of the Eyre Peninsula and the Elliston Area School has 65 students, 24 across the secondary years. At Elliston Area School there is a commitment to support students with disabilities in gaining experience in the world of work. This has been done through Community Studies and School Based Apprenticeships. Over the last two years a student who has Autism, Bobby, has experienced great success through encouragement to work in the community and for the community.

At Elliston Area School the Food and Hospitality teacher, Deidre Chapman, has run a school restaurant that involves Community Studies students catering for the community one night a month. The menu is mostly international food and this is planned and prepared for over two weeks, then presented on one night. Bobby really enjoyed this challenge. He previously struggled with recipe comprehension, time management and measurement but through the restaurant, and with excellent peer support, he rose to the challenge and revelled in the hard work involved. Bobby worked in the kitchen with only one other student, and her patience and understanding of his disability enabled him to feel confident and proud of his involvement. Each restaurant entailed cooking from 8:30am until 7:00pm followed by serving and then the final clean up of the kitchen. Throughout this subject Bobby showed an enthusiasm and tenacity that has not been evident previously in his other subjects. Working with only one other student, having constant but discreet support, and the fact that he was serving the community (and they loved every restaurant) were determining factors in Bobby excelling at this subject.

In 2012 Bobby did his first Community Studies by working at the local IGA stacking shelves each Thursday morning when the delivery truck came in. As a result of this and working in the restaurant Bobby was a recipient of a LONG TAN award (leadership and teamwork skills, given by the Australian Defence Forces) http://www.adflongtanawards.info/). A plane flew into Elliston and two pilots presented the awards. Bobby was also voted house captain last year and was a great inspiration to the younger students at the school.

This year as a Year 12 student Bobby has embraced working in the community. He has signed on for a School Based Apprenticeship (SBA) at the Elliston Council and is working one day per week in the local mechanics work shop as an assistant. Working with the Elliston Council has given him the experience of working for Local Government, and the rules and regulations involved in this, as well as the opportunity to work with two young men as mentors. He absolutely loves these days, working on sites all around Elliston, learning a wide variety of skills in maintenance, gardening and environmental planning. One of the main reasons for his continuing interest in this job has been the men he works with. Bobby has a quirky sense of humour and he developed an excellent rapport with his
mentors through this. Up to date Bobby has shown little interest in the book work required with a School Based Apprenticeship, which unfortunately may change the situation as he does enjoy the physical and social side of the job.

The other subject, Community Studies or ‘Work and the Community’ has also been a success for Bobby. One of his goals in this subject is to completely service a car unassisted, and work with renewing the large tractor tyres independently. In consultation with his employers it has been pleasing to learn that Bobby uses his initiative each day and asks for extra work if he has completed a task. This is something that Bobby has not done before and shows he is comfortable, confident and willing to challenge himself once again. As part of this subject he has to complete a journal, which he is pedantic about, and records his successes and challenges, the latter requiring support in class.

Overall we are trying to set Bobby up with skills that will assist him when transferring from the school environment to the world of work. In the last two years he has learnt many new skills that will scaffold him into the future. The next step will be to help him write a resume and ensure he understands the connection between diet, physical wellbeing and mental health. This semester he is doing Community studies again but this time, Health and the Community.

Deidre Chapman
Elliston Area School
Ph: 8687 9167

A MODEL OF SUPPORT AT BANKSIA PARK INTERNATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

Sandra Niscioli, special education teacher, was interviewed about special education at Banksia International Park High School (BPIHS).

Can you tell us about Transition of students from primary school to high school?

Before students start high school the Special Education Teacher visits the primary schools to gather information about the students who will be transitioning the following year, these include students with NEP’s and others with Learning Difficulties. This information is also used to plan student class groups. It is also an opportunity to receive both formal and informal information from staff who have known the student and family through the primary school years, ensuring that this knowledge is valued and not lost.

How is support provided for students with NEP’s at BPIHS?

Generally students with NEP’s and learning difficulties are split across all year 8 classes, but those with more significant needs are grouped together in one or two classes. This enables more support for these students in mainstream classes. When planning the allocation of special education teacher support in mainstream classes OHS is considered, e.g. home economics / technical studies. All students receive support in three out of five of their classes (e.g. English, Maths, Science).

Students with NEP’s in year 8 can attend an Integrated Studies Support line instead of LOTE. This may be for a semester, or a year, depending on the needs of the students. Students with learning difficulties may also attend Integrated Studies support. Integrated studies Support may focus on:
- Organisational skills e.g. Saving work on computers/folders
- Literacy and numeracy
- Adjustments and differentiation strategies for work from mainstream classes and homework requirements (regular communication between class teachers and special education teacher).

The aim is to help students be successful in mainstream curriculum, using strategies that differentiate the mandated curriculum, making learning achievable so students are successful. Parents often ask for their students to join Integrated Studies Support.

continued
What are some of the strategies you use to assist students to access curriculum in mainstream classes?

- Students are explicitly taught how to read, use and interpret texts – breaking down text layout, using the glossary etc.
- As students often have slow processing speeds they are provided with step by step worksheets/proformas to complete, rather than being required to copy text, this allows for more time to process concepts being taught and to demonstrate what they have understood.
- Grammar, writing, word attack skills. Resources include:
  - THRASS to teach graphemes, phonemes etc.
  - Reading Freedom
  - Jay Marshall’s book ‘The Inclusive Teaching Strategies book’ is excellent, for example the six boxes.
  - Neil MacKay’s book ‘Removing Dyslexia as a barrier to Achievement’ has excellent strategies for writing.
  - Think Organise Write Turn thinking into Writing Using Graphic Organisers, Anne Quill & A Townsend.
  - The Complete Phonic Handbook, Hope, D.
- Strategies such as: mindmaps, brainstorming, highlighting text, scaffolding for written work, scribing for students, paired reading, reading comprehension skills including inferencing.
- Modifying tasks and negotiating work students can complete at their own level.
- Explicitly teaching numeracy language and skills needed to learn new concepts including concrete material.
- Using word processing for all written work so it can be edited easily, and teaching editing skills.
- Discussing open book tests questions to ensure understanding of what is required and the concept being assessed. Students are guided to review their notes and book work then they answer the question to the best of their ability. If they don’t understand the concept or it requires higher order thinking the question is eliminated.

How are students assessed?

When writing school reports students are given grades, which may have ‘Negotiated Assessment’ or ‘Negotiated curriculum’ written next to the grade. This means students with disabilities can achieve success, and their growth and learning can be recorded. (The success is at their own level, not for example, the year 8 standards).

As a Special Education Teacher how do you support teachers?

Teachers are given support to differentiate the curriculum, including providing a range of strategies, and are assisted in sourcing and buying resources that meet the learning style and level of student’s literacy and numeracy levels. They are also supported to modify assignments and tests for students with NEPs and students with learning difficulties.

Tell us about pathway planning at BPIHS

When students begin school in year 8 the Special Education teacher establishes a relationship with both the parents and student, which is further developed over the high school years. Parents often need support to begin thinking about a pathway for their child, as school is a safe and secure place and the end of school can be a daunting prospect for many. Right from the start students are taught and encouraged to take responsibility.

As with all students they go through a course counselling process, transition planning, and these are recorded in agreed actions at the NEP. After students turn 15 years, there is flexibility around subject selection, for example a student with Asperger Syndrome may attend two art lessons and drop another subject. Students’ individual needs are always considered.

In Year 10 students can access the Hyde Street Program and Prospect Centre, where they can also undertake transport training. They are encouraged to move out of their comfort zone, and may attend one day a week or more elsewhere. They also attend work experience to give them the opportunity to make informed decisions about careers/interests, before they attend VET courses in year 11. They are often reluctant to start at Hyde Street, and the first visit is accompanied by a staff member. This can contribute to 2 SACE Units in Integrated Studies.

Students in year 11 can attend VET courses at Prospect Centre, VET North East Vocational Opportunities and the State Transition Program. They are also encouraged to connect with Disability Employment Services. There are also short courses available as part of transition planning for students with NEPs, at the Flexi Centre Kilburn. These include Learners Licence, Tyre fitting, First Aid, Basic trade maths. These can be incorporated into the SACE unit Integrated Studies.

What is available for students who do not cope with mainstream high school?

Some of these students access a FLO program, which they can enrol in from year 8. They have a FLO case manager and attend programs with support off site. Some may attend school part time.
Summary

The most important role of the special education teacher is to develop relationships with the students and their families. Most support is provided in Year 8 to enable the special education teacher to learn about the student’s strengths, weaknesses and learning styles. This means that in later years when more mainstream class support is provided by SSO’s, the special education teacher knows the student well and is able to assist with pathway programming as she has an in-depth knowledge of the learner.

Positive relationships with the class teachers are developed through regular meetings, providing succinct NEP information, providing strategies for differentiation and ensuring that the teacher is assisted with reports. Day Map software is used to indicate students who have NEP’s. The Special Education teacher has a timetable that enables flexibility to be available to support new teachers, attend NEP meetings, respond to issues in mainstream, and manage the SSO support.

There are regular debriefs with the line manager, administration officer, year level managers, the school counsellor and the Christian Pastoral Support Worker. As part of the school structure there is a Student Services Team which includes the above including the leadership team. The special education teacher also has a regular spot on the Staff meeting agenda to brief staff on students’ needs and progress. New staff to the school have commented on how BPIHS Students with NEPs have a high positive profile and feel very supported.

In conclusion, I work closely with all students to help them reach their potential which also involves building a rapport with families and teachers. It is rewarding when students, families and fellow staff acknowledge and thank you for the time and achievement that students have made. Parents say how they value the happy socially adapted young adults who transition from High School with an impressive resume of school achievements: offsite accredited programs and planned destination options. ■

Sandra Niscioli
Special Education Teacher
Banksia Park International High School
Ph 8264 8122

Oral Language Difficulties in Adolescents

Oral language competence is a predictor for the development of social skills and literacy skills as well as the ability to communicate in more complex ways. The importance of oral language can be seen in communication (telling stories, following instructions, reasoning), learning (integrating new ideas, linking words and ideas) social interaction (joining a group, problem solving), memory (organise and process information) and thinking skills (planning, reasoning, reflecting). Adolescents with language disorder will have difficulty in all facets of secondary school – literacy, curriculum, friendships and behaviour.

It is important to remember that though students with language disorder have significant difficulties in verbal comprehension, they have relative strength in learning in the visual mode. Manipulative tasks, perceptual reasoning, visual perceptual tasks are all in the non-verbal area of learning. Often these students are good at drawing, practical activities, computer use and sport. Finding a way to tap into those proficiencies is a key strategy for managing the learning of students with language disorder.

Pragmatics is the social use of language. Integrating verbal, nonverbal and implied messages and using colloquial language are the basic requirements for successful communication. These complex and often subtle social skills are not easily learned by the student with language disorder and so they can become socially inept, resulting often in social isolation and ridicule. An inability to learn the rules of conversation will make them appear ‘odd’ and makes it difficult for people to understand what they are trying to communicate. They can be the subject of bullying, sometimes without even realising that comments are meant to mock or deride. Poor reasoning skills means that students with language disorder have difficulty expressing frustration, understanding consequences, understanding why they are rejected and behave inappropriately.

It is easy to interpret the student’s communication as rude or hostile and attribute their difficulties in socialisation to poor behaviour. (“He chooses to behave that way.”) When a young person has had difficulty with communication situations since they were a small child, they will have built up a repertoire of strategies to hide their difficulties – avoiding certain situations, becoming quiet and withdrawn or being disruptive to the point of removal from the situation. Add to this the fact that a history of poor oral language skills can result in an adolescent who is frustrated, unsuccessful, unhappy and unpopular. They will often use physical means for expressing frustration at not understanding, and impulsively lash out if the attempt at communication fails. All this can mask the language disability and lead to social and emotional problems when it is not recognised and managed well.

The Challenge of Secondary School

Students in secondary school spend 75-90% of their day as receivers of information. This means students have the task of reorganising this information...
cognitively, separating important and irrelevant information, demonstrating their command and recall of knowledge and participating in a variety of discussions. On top of this they must be able to work independently, organise their time and belongings and complete written tasks.

A student with a language disorder will struggle with many of these demands due to their difficulties with receptive and expressive language and their inability to process language at the same rate as other students. They may miss important information because they are still processing earlier information or perhaps having difficulty making connections between separate sources. Pre-tutoring vocabulary and concepts important for a new topic will greatly assist the student with language disorder to access and understand the information when it is presented to the class.

Teachers must realise that inattention may result from the fact that the student isn’t following or understanding what is being presented. Therefore it is important for the teacher to be explicit. This can be done by slowing down the rate of presentation, teaching key vocabulary important to that topic, giving information in smaller steps, supporting with visual scaffolds and providing more opportunities for practice.

A student with a language disorder may have difficulties with note taking so guided lesson summary notes can be provided in which they must listen for key pieces of information which are then added to the notes during the lesson. These notes will often have embedded graphic organisers so students are also gaining the main idea about a topic. This means students are more likely to be focused and at the end of the lesson they will have all the relevant information they need.

To ensure a student can complete a task, explain the purpose of the task and explicitly teach the skills required to complete it. Break tasks down into smaller clear written steps and negotiate an appropriate amount of work and extended timeline if required. At times it will be necessary to set tasks with similar content but at a different level of complexity.

Teachers who have a good understanding of a student with a language disorder will focus on their strengths and negotiate alternative ways of presenting information and assignments eg; draw and label diagrams, create a model, develop a PowerPoint or video presentation, work with a partner or perform a skit. Remember to use supportive devices: computers, tablet devices, digital pens, calculators, spell-checkers, text to speech programs, mind maps and checklists.

It is important for educators to look behind the behaviour of students and consider the possibility of language disorder playing a role so that appropriate strategies can be set in place. The mismanagement of adolescents with language learning disabilities can have negative long-term effects. “In secondary school, language difficulties are likely to impact adversely on the student’s relationships, academic achievement, ability to reason and problem solve, and ability to plan and predict outcomes. A combination of these factors often means that this group of students is at significant risk of failing to finish school and also failing to achieve positive outcomes socially and occupationally.” State Government of Victoria, Department of Education and Early childhood Development 2009.

Reference:


Carol Edwards & Jill Bailes
Communication Support Service, SERU
Ph 8235 2871
Background
Charles Campbell College is an R-12 school (following the amalgamation in 2012 of Charles Campbell Secondary School and Campbelltown Primary School).

The Middle and Senior Schools campus (years 7-12) have approximately sixty Students with Disabilities, who are supported by the Special Education Team, comprising two Special Educators (1.6 FTE) and two SSOs (approximately 25 hours).

The Vision Impairment Support Programme supports students with severe vision impairments and is managed by staff from the South Australian School for the Vision Impaired (SASVI).

Support Structure at CCC
CCC has a seven line timetable and Students with Disabilities attend general year level classes for all their subjects but have the option of participating in targeted programmes (described below). Negotiation for this occurs, firstly, at the Negotiated Education Plan (NEP) Review for transition to secondary school and each year during the course selection process for the following year.

Each subject teacher of a student with a NEP receives written information about the special needs of the student and describes the particular accommodations and adaptations required for that student in the areas of curriculum content, delivery and assessment. Special Education teachers collaborate with staff to identify suitable resources and plan appropriate learning and assessment tasks.

SSO support requirements are identified through the NEP process. In-class support is allocated based on the priorities of safety and access and is most often provided for students in practical subjects. At CCC the two SSOs are a key part of the Special Education Team and work hand-in-hand with the teachers to ensure that support for students is flexible and responsive to changing situations and needs. For example, the lunch-time Games Room was set up and staffed by the team to provide a safe and welcoming area for a range of students who found the interactions in the yard somewhat of a challenge.

Middle School – Targeted Programmes
A number of small group classes consisting of 10-15 students are taught by Special Education teachers or teachers with expertise in the area.

Vocational English focuses on the development of functional literacy skills with an emphasis on everyday texts. Vocational Maths supports the development of maths skills required for daily living including problem solving. Learning is individualised to build specific, identified numeracy skills for each student.

Learning and Assessment Plans for Vocational English and Vocational Maths are designed using the Australian Curriculum. A current focus for our professional development involves using the Australian Curriculum content and achievement standards to identify current levels of learning and achievement for students with disabilities, selecting the most appropriate content to plan class or individual student learning programmes and using the NEP process to negotiate and document assessment and reporting against the achievement standards. The learning programme in Vocational English and Maths also includes modules from the Certificate 1 in Education and Skills Development.

Support and Review
Support and Review is a study line designed to give students extra help with any areas of difficulty such as current class work, research, projects, homework etc. The Support and Review teacher monitors progress of individual students in each of their subjects, identifies where particular accommodations or extra support may be required and liaises with subject teachers to negotiate and plan for individualised learning. It also provides time for the teacher to support students in other areas, for example, planning and organisation, addressing concerns about behaviour or personal/social development and obtaining work experience.

A significant part of the Support and Review teacher’s role involves working with particular students and their teachers to manage behaviour issues and is useful in enabling intervention at an early stage to help prevent escalation.

Senior School
Students are encouraged to select SACE subjects within their areas of interest and skill. Teachers understand the flexibilities within the SACE, particularly at Stage 1, and are pro-active in seeking collaboration with Special Educators to plan for successful achievement. Many Students with Disabilities have also received SACE credits for successfully completing VET programmes in a range of areas.

Particular SACE subjects are offered at CCC to support senior students with significant literacy and numeracy needs.

Stage 1
Literacy for Work and Community Life and Numeracy for Work and Community Life enable achievement of the compulsory literacy and numeracy requirements of the SACE.

Stage 2
Community Studies is a popular choice because it provides students with the opportunity to design
their own learning around areas of personal interest and strength.

Community Studies is also used as a ‘conversion’ for students who struggle with the literacy demands of particular subjects. For example students have written Community Studies contracts to convert from Food and Hospitality, Child Studies, Information Processing, Furniture Construction and Workplace Practices. This is valuable in enabling students to have the benefit of learning with their class group and continuing to develop their skills in the subject area.

All senior students with disabilities are offered the option of enrolling in a Support and Review class and this is taken up by almost all of them. This provides the primary support for successful completion of the (compulsory) Personal Learning Plan and Research Project.

Students with Disabilities in their final year of schooling are strongly encouraged to enrol in the State Transition Programme. This has been invaluable in supporting students (and their families) in the daunting move into the world of further training and work options and also counts towards the SACE. In 2013 six of our year 12 students are enrolled in the Programme and it has been wonderful to see the development in their skills and confidence as well as the reassurance of knowing that, at the completion of the programme, they will link in with a Disability Employment Service provider to give ongoing support in making the transition from school to work.

Mary Zillante
Charles Campbell College
Ph 8337 6844

LE FEVRE HIGH SECONDARY SPECIAL CLASS - JOURNEY OF 4 YEARS

Beginning (1st Year)

When I began teaching at the recently established Special Class at Le Fevre High School I spent most of my first year repairing student relationships, developing an engaging curriculum, building resources and developing transition plans.

Students in Secondary Special Classes often bring anxiety with them that can be heightened when in the same classroom. They also may have had bad experiences in Primary School, such as being bullied. A number of the students had previously spent time in the withdrawal room, being suspended and had trouble in the yard. I was aware of offsite programs such as Hyde St and Prospect Centre, but at this stage none of the students had been enrolled in them.

A weekly excursion program was implemented to focus on using public transport and activities in the city, which was modelled on the Hyde St Program. The class had rarely been on any excursions, so we began excursions to parks, playgrounds and museums etc, which assisted in students repairing relationships with each other and their teachers. These experiences showed learning didn’t have to be in the classroom and could be fun.

Changing (2nd Year)

In the second year I began to develop a vision of what the Regional Secondary Special Class would look like and worked with my line manager to develop a vision statement.

I strongly believe the greatest change agent in Special Options is the NEP. During NEP meetings with parent/caregivers and outside agencies rigorous transition plans were introduced based on consultation, community involvement and work experience. For transition goals to be achieved they would begin programs off site, begin community involvement and use public transport.

The following are a number of programs that were established in the first year:

- Taxi Transport:
  It staggered me that 15 and 16 year olds who lived nearby would come to school by taxi. The goal was that all students cease using taxis by year 9. Extra SSO hours in Transport Training were accessed through the Special Education Resource Unit (SERU) and a rigorous training and supervision program was implemented for students to be competent in using public transport. This adds to their wellbeing and integration into the school community.

- Public Transport into the city
  An important part of the year nine curriculum is training the students to use public transport, so a city excursion program was undertaken over a term. The class became competent in locating Adelaide landmarks. Students learnt how to catch the tram, the free bus and walk safely around the city. This enabled students in year 9 to participate fully in the Hyde St Program in Year 10.

- Community Involvement
  The expectation is that students will participate fully in community and recreation activities when they leave school. Each calendar year there is a particular focus on certain community activities.

- Aquatics
  The students participate in Aquatics each term. They are taught about water safety, wearing appropriate clothing, respecting each other, the equipment and being respectful to the instructors. Activities include sailing, snorkelling, kayaking and surfing. The Aquatics staff have an excellent rapport with the students who have grown in confidence and further developed their team skills.

continued
- Bushwalking in National Parks
  During term 2 and 3 the students are involved experiencing the nature and the peaceful surroundings of our local National Parks, for example, the Echo Tunnel at Belair National Park the second waterfall at Morialta and Waterfall Gully to Mt Lofty. Students learn to manage their drinks and food to take on the hike, wear appropriate clothing and follow instructions.
- Participating in the Museum and Zoo Program
  Students visit a range of museums, including the SA Museum, The Maritime Museum, the Railway and Aviation Museum, and the Birdwood Motor Museum. Students learn to follow the instructions from staff and respect property, while undertaking English and Numeracy units from the Australian Curriculum.
- Library Program
  The students attend the Community Library Program, including the Semaphore, Port Adelaide, Parks and Enfield Libraries. Students are encouraged to borrow and learn the skills of appropriate behaviour and how to interact with library staff.

CONSOLIDATING (after 3 – 4 years)
- Fishing Program
  The class have been involved in a fishing program which is a lifelong skill they can do by themselves for very little cost. They have been to the Port River, West lakes, Semaphore Jetty, Torrens outlet and St Kilda. Some of their Maths and Science lessons are based on fishing.
- Community Service
  The class has just begun visiting the residents of the Phillip Kennedy Centre at Largs Bay. The students enjoy listening to residents stories and are able to share their positive experiences about school. On each occasion the students bring biscuits and scones they have made in Home Economics. They learnt about appropriate behaviour in another setting.
- School Community Garden
  The class has been involved in establishing and maintaining a school community garden. With donations from Port Adelaide Rotary and a local council member asphalt was removed and fruit trees were purchased. The Trees for Life Program was established, the garden has an extensive pond structure and vegetables and herbs are grown for the Home Economics Faculty and families at school. Certificate 1 in Horticulture.

The students in the Special Class undertook a Cert 1 in Horticulture through Maxima Training Organisation. The students completed modules at school through completing tasks in the School Community Garden and the surrounding lawn area.

TRANSITIONING
The main focus of the Lefevre High Secondary Special Class is for all educational programmes to be embedded into the Australian Curriculum with a focus on Developing Transition Skills. This pedagogical shift has taken over 4 years to occur.
- Community Studies
  Year 12 students continue their offsite programs at Prospect Centre and Statewide Transition but also began a Stage 1 Community Studies subject based on volunteering. They currently achieve this through doing volunteer work at the Australian Refugee Association (ARA). Some students work in the warehouse, while other students repair bikes and donate them to the ARA.
- Prospect Centre
  Students in year 11 and year 12 attend programs at the Prospect Centre. All the students have been successful in attendance, participation and in achieving desired outcomes. This is largely due to the excellent staff, the engaging programs and excellent communication between families, LHS and the Prospect Centre.
- Work Experience
  The students collectively attend a week of work experience at the Cruising Yacht Squadron at North Haven. They are involved in OHS&W, plant propagation and using basic machinery.

Conclusion
The exit data has shows that students are going into employment options. One of the students gained work at Aspitec for 4 days a week. Another student has started in his father's business. Two students with high anxiety levels went into the Flexible Learning Options (FLO) program. One student is doing paid work at Phoenix and 2 others are doing work experience there.

Having a team of supportive people around each child in the Special Class at Le Fevre High with good pedagogy, appropriate resourcing, good facilities, strong partnerships with families and outside agencies and a focus on transition through the NEP has seen students enjoy school and have a transition pathway leading to work.

Greg Cashel
Special Class Teacher, Le Fevre High School
Ph 8449 7004

The teacher’s first job is always to ensure that curriculum is coherent, important, inviting, and thoughtful.
Tomlinson, CA & Eidson, C. Differentials in Practice. 2011.
The Learning Centre in a Nutshell

This article is about the development of the Learning Centre at Glossop High School. Initially, with Riverland regional disability coordinators, psychologist and SSO, I visited several schools that were already running successful programs. Christies Beach High School, Seaton High School and Golden Grove High School. They each have professional, upbeat and sharing staff that were more than willing to share their strategies, programming and structural ideas.

The Riverland Learning Centre at Glossop High School is capped at 12 students, Years 8-12, and has a home group teacher and one full time SSO. Students are identified as having an intellectual disability or a significant learning impairment. The home group teacher teaches all subject areas other than Tech studies, agriculture, art, drama, and sewing.

Ergonomics/Learning Environment

The room is an old, recently renovated classroom, designed to be conducive to a positive learning environment. There is a small kitchen area at the back with a large dining/group work table and a large couch has been placed in a quiet corner of the room. The front of the room features the interactive white board, a large television and a white board. Desks are placed in the centre of this space. The walls have been painted strategically; the kitchen wall is magenta, affecting healing, compassion and caring; the white board wall is turquoise which promotes creative energy and taking individual responsibility, and the two side walls are lemon influencing learning, self-esteem, confidence and relaxing for the nervous system. The walls are kept relatively bare for the sole purpose of keeping clear, creative headspace. Learning walls have graphic organizers, positive behavior visuals, student ‘proud work’ samples and phonics/word/ math charts. The couch/quiet area has picture displays of students participating in various fun activities. The creative wall displays class values, class behavioural agreements and some behavioural strategies e.g. a mood thermometer. Students take responsibility for their learning environment and take great pride in keeping it tidy and clean. Responsibility and independence are learned through life skills.

Boundaries/Expectations

At the beginning of each school year, the school values are explicitly taught, along with routines using visuals and role-play. The students, parents, and teacher then design the Positive Behavioural Agreement. This document takes 2-3 weeks to establish and sets in place clear boundaries, rewards, both positive and negative consequences and strategies for re-directing inappropriate behavior. The student, teacher and parents sign the document and it is displayed in the classroom and shared with all staff. We review this document regularly to discuss concerns, changes and to revise our expectations.

Knowing Your students

The ‘big ideas’ for learning are identity and relationships, communication (literacy), physical activity, learning through discovery and learning (cognitive learning). Our job as educators, along with the family is to provide as many places, opportunities and learning experiences while building on the student’s interests to guarantee SUCCESS.

As with all schools, NEP’s are developed prior to any student entering the Learning Centre and reviewed regularly throughout the school year. Accommodations are considered and adjustments made to tailor the student’s school life for success. This involves caregivers, departmental staff, teachers, support agencies and the student taking an encompassing and holistic approach to the child’s educational, social and emotional development. It means getting to know the learner, their disability/ impairment, social being, characteristics, triggers, skill level, difficulties, barriers, strengths and school history.

During the transition phase, meetings are held with previous SSOs and teachers. Students transitioning from Year 7 to 8 spend one day a week in the Centre during terms 3 and 4. Transition from year 7 to 8 is tailored to meet each student’s individual needs. For example some students with Autism Spectrum Disorder may need specialized transitioning in the form of a quiet guided tour outside school hours meeting some of the school staff, visiting with a trusted friend and developing a visual booklet or social story outlining all key rooms and staff members. Ongoing review meetings gauge and monitor student development, and develop an understanding to support the student and his family.

Developing Social Emotional being, Self Esteem

Self Concept

Strategies for success:

- Positive reinforcement (five positive comments to every one)
- Plenty of Opportunities to succeed
- Daily meditation – relaxation, mind and body, guided imagery and controlled breathing techniques.
- Shine program - Sexual health and relationships
- Inclusion in selected mainstream classes and community activities. Subject areas are selected where students will achieve success, and the selection considerations include: teacher, class year level, class dynamics, student capabilities and characteristics (e.g. physical education, art, tech studies, drama and sewing). Students have the opportunity to build positive relationships with peers, see modeled peer behaviours and there is the opportunity for mainstream students to build acceptance, resilience and awareness of students in the Learning Centre.

Knowing Your students

The ‘big ideas’ for learning are identity and relationships, communication (literacy), physical activity, learning through discovery and learning (cognitive learning). Our job as educators, along with the family is to provide as many places, opportunities and learning experiences while building on the student’s interests to guarantee SUCCESS.

As with all schools, NEP’s are developed prior to any student entering the Learning Centre and reviewed regularly throughout the school year. Accommodations are considered and adjustments made to tailor the student’s school life for success. This involves caregivers, departmental staff, teachers, support agencies and the student taking an encompassing and holistic approach to the child’s educational, social and emotional development. It means getting to know the learner, their disability/ impairment, social being, characteristics, triggers, skill level, difficulties, barriers, strengths and school history.

During the transition phase, meetings are held with previous SSOs and teachers. Students transitioning from Year 7 to 8 spend one day a week in the Centre during terms 3 and 4. Transition from year 7 to 8 is tailored to meet each student’s individual needs. For example some students with Autism Spectrum Disorder may need specialized transitioning in the form of a quiet guided tour outside school hours meeting some of the school staff, visiting with a trusted friend and developing a visual booklet or social story outlining all key rooms and staff members. Ongoing review meetings gauge and monitor student development, and develop an understanding to support the student and his family.

Developing Social Emotional being, Self Esteem

Self Concept

Strategies for success:

- Positive reinforcement (five positive comments to every one)
- Plenty of Opportunities to succeed
- Daily meditation – relaxation, mind and body, guided imagery and controlled breathing techniques.
- Shine program - Sexual health and relationships
- Inclusion in selected mainstream classes and community activities. Subject areas are selected where students will achieve success, and the selection considerations include: teacher, class year level, class dynamics, student capabilities and characteristics (e.g. physical education, art, tech studies, drama and sewing). Students have the opportunity to build positive relationships with peers, see modeled peer behaviours and there is the opportunity for mainstream students to build acceptance, resilience and awareness of students in the Learning Centre.

Knowing Your students

The ‘big ideas’ for learning are identity and relationships, communication (literacy), physical activity, learning through discovery and learning (cognitive learning). Our job as educators, along with the family is to provide as many places, opportunities and learning experiences while building on the student’s interests to guarantee SUCCESS.

As with all schools, NEP’s are developed prior to any student entering the Learning Centre and reviewed regularly throughout the school year. Accommodations are considered and adjustments made to tailor the student’s school life for success. This involves caregivers, departmental staff, teachers, support agencies and the student taking an encompassing and holistic approach to the child’s educational, social and emotional development. It means getting to know the learner, their disability/ impairment, social being, characteristics, triggers, skill level, difficulties, barriers, strengths and school history.

During the transition phase, meetings are held with previous SSOs and teachers. Students transitioning from Year 7 to 8 spend one day a week in the Centre during terms 3 and 4. Transition from year 7 to 8 is tailored to meet each student’s individual needs. For example some students with Autism Spectrum Disorder may need specialized transitioning in the form of a quiet guided tour outside school hours meeting some of the school staff, visiting with a trusted friend and developing a visual booklet or social story outlining all key rooms and staff members. Ongoing review meetings gauge and monitor student development, and develop an understanding to support the student and his family.
• Community programs and off site courses such as TAFE and BEDFORD Industries e.g. Small motors course, Headspace, Live Life Well program, swimming with disabilities SA.

• Students learn to plan, budget, shop, prepare, clean up and eat in an appropriate social manner. They develop great pride in preparing and sharing a meal with others.

Literacy and Numeracy
Every day literacy and numeracy classes are held in the Learning Centre to explicitly teach these skills. Each morning a 70 minute block involves 10 minutes mental arithmetic practice followed by 20 minute blocks of individualised literacy and numeracy activities, with the schedule displayed on the white board. Time is kept using a large visual countdown clock. Students become independent learners in these sessions, organising, collecting equipment and moving from one location to the next. The session allows for one on one teacher-student interaction, group learning, peer teaching, use of IT equipment (iPad, desktop computers, laptops) and independent learning. Some of the programs students engage in are Lexia, Reading Plus, Symphony maths, Mathletics, Reading Box, My Financial Skills, Spelling, My Home Skills, Money Matters, cooking, researching recipes, writing shopping lists and other writing genres.

Australian Curriculum/SACE
The Australian Curriculum implementation is a step by step process. A workshop presented by Sarah Humphries at the SERU EXPO has been inspirational and provided the confidence to start working on the curriculum following her guidelines. Sarah demonstrated how it is possible to cover the same topic with year 8-12 whilst expecting different achievement standards and different capabilities. It is a crafty process but achievable.

Transition to Vocational Education
From year 8 the process for transition to vocational education begins. Many opportunities are provided for students to partake in taster courses, develop independence and build on life skills. Students begin working on their Person Learning Plan (PLP) which leads into their Research project. Courses are sourced through TAFE and BEDFORD. All students participated in Certificate 1, Small Motors course last year and are now able to work, repair and maintain lawn mowers and whipper snippers. Our students begin participating in the Now and Next program in year 10. This program brings student, caregiver/s, regional disability staff, teacher, Disabilities SA and any work placement brokers to the table. Meetings are conducted off school site, on a termly basis or as needed to establish the best post school options, work experiences and courses for the student. By taking the transition process out of school and involving people from outside, it marks a rite of passage and signifies the ending of one part of the young person’s life and the beginning of another.

Differentiation
Differentiation comes in many shapes and forms and adjustments are made depending on individual students. It is dynamic, constantly reviewed, altered and tailored for each student. Multiple intelligence and the influence of the great Pirozzo matrix. All the students are tested diagnostically, verbally and visually monitored regularly for success, adjustment needs and support areas. Several of the IT literacy and numeracy programs aid in this explicit monitoring which helps save valuable time. Using visuals and offering plenty of life skill and social emotional life experiences and opportunities are an integral part of the program. The focus is on vocabulary, explicit and systematic instruction, modeling and scaffolding student learning. Some of the tools used are mind maps, graphic organizers, X and Y charts. The most success with learning is through having high expectations, lots of experiences, guided practice, prompting, praise and lots of positive encouragement and support.

Key to Success

• Ongoing assessment, monitoring and adjusting to student needs.

• Professional development for teacher/support staff workers e.g. Online training-Autism and Dyslexia, high quality SERU IT training workshops

• IT - use of technology in our class rooms e.g. I pads, computers, IWB

• A Trans disciplinary approach

• Ongoing Regional expert support and advice.

• Support of school principal and staff.

• Diversity of programs e.g. differentiation, multiple intelligences, inclusive of educational, social, emotional and mental development

• Partnership of caregiver/s, school staff and other professionals around the students development

• Networking, sharing and visiting other schools.

• Partnership and collaboration between school, family and outside school agencies and brokers to enable a successful and supported post school transition phase.

• Transport (eg The Variety Club for our wonderful bus).

• Last but not least, a very dedicated SSO.

Every day brings new challenges and successes. We are forever learning. I am grateful to the twelve wonderful students I have the honour of teaching, and who, every day, teach me.

Tasha Morath
Special Class Teacher
Glossop High School
Ph 85832004
What is Community Studies?
Community Studies is a SACE subject that is offered at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 levels, as either a 10 or 20 credit subject and is the main vehicle used at Mitcham Girls High for students with special needs to gain their SACE certificates. It embraces all subject areas including Arts, Business, Communication, Design, Environment, Foods, Health & Recreation, Technology and Work. In some schools it is offered as a choice subject, but in many cases it is offered within another class, for students who are struggling with the academic side. It is also offered to students who are failing in other subjects; these students can convert to Community Studies part way through the year, using the work and time they have already completed, as the background to their contracts.

Students discuss, negotiate and develop their own individual programs or contracts with the help and guidance of their teachers. Group projects may be attempted, as long as students have individual tasks to do and write their own contracts; it is essential that they explain what their involvement is and how they are doing it. Each contract needs to include the development of skills and abilities including numeracy and literacy and the development of at least one of the SACE capabilities.

A key element is that it must involve the community in some way. This could be:

- to use them as a resource for new learning
- to make a contribution by volunteering, donating to, raising money for or conducting a service

Recent changes to the subject have certainly made it more challenging for students with special needs. Is it possible for them to pass? As a teacher of Community Studies over a number of years, my answer to this is Yes!

Teachery however, need to have strong support strategies in hand.

Strategies that I have found to be successful

1. The key to completing a successful contract is to support students in choosing the right topic, one that they are clearly interested in and one which lends itself to community involvement. Look first at existing involvement in the community or future goals. Students with special needs may want to learn more about their disability and let others know about it.

Some suggestions
Including contributions from Kaye Lee: Community Studies teacher St Dominic’s Priory College

Existing Involvement in Sporting /Arts Activities
- Involvement in SASI - involvement at an elite level e.g. Football, Netball, Diving or Gymnastics etc.
- Providing therapeutic massage for rugby team
- Coaching a sporting team – preparing a handbook
- Participating in Community drama, musical, dance production either on stage, backstage or behind the scenes
- Playing in a band

Existing involvement in the Community
- Supporting a parent, relative with house work, shopping etc.
- Involvement in CFS, Scouts, Church group, Surf life saving etc.
- Almond Blossom Festival – coordinating a Fashion Parade
- Setting up a small business e.g. Cup Cakes
- Fundraising / promoting awareness e.g. for Cancer Council
- Being involved with Land care or Trees for Life

Contributing to the Community
- Writing a handbook of information for other students to understand that particular disability
- Doing up toys or bikes to donate to less fortunate children
- Peer Tutors / Peer Mentors
- Looking after wetlands
- Making a quilt and donating to Anglicare
- Making cages, knitting coats for animals at an Animal Rescue Centre
- Creating a work of art, organising a community exhibition

Work Experience/ volunteer
- Looking at courses and pathways to a future career
- Organising work experience in 1 or more areas of interest
- Volunteering at organisations like Meals on Wheels, Animal Rescue Centre, Senior Citizens

Self Development
- Living away from home and learning what is involved
- Getting Drivers Licence – issues for teenagers
- Organising wedding – making a scrap book
- Travelling overseas – research issues such as carrying money safely
- Planning an 18th birthday
- Saving to buy a first car

Continued
• Preparing a fitness regime for self or parent
• Designing and making formal dress
• Learning about cultural background – recipes, traditions, family history

2. A well written contract is essential for students to be successful; steps need to be clear, detailed and logical with methods of keeping evidence clearly recorded. This is a very difficult genre and I spend a lot of time on this, heavily scaffolding each section. The performance standards allow teachers to indicate how much help the student has had e.g. C standard can be “in consultation with the teacher” and a D level “with support”. I give students strong support, knowing that a well written contract can then be completed independently. Students have the chance to gain a higher mark in other areas such as community interaction, development of skills, presentation etc. Suggest methods of collecting evidence that match the abilities of students – annotated photos, use technology and audio recordings etc.

3. Students are required to have community mentors; at Stage 2, it must be someone from the wider community. A “good” mentor can make all the difference to a struggling student so it is vital that I help my students find one who is interested enough to provide feedback, meet regularly and come to their presentations.

4. Interaction with the community is essential. Many Community Studies students lack confidence and have poor communication skills. For this reason I do not expect them to go into the community without strong support.. Many times I have begun the phone call and then handed it over to the student, or we work out together what they will say and write it down. I also often take students into the community for the initial contact (SSO’s can also do this). In most cases, I only need to do this once and then expect students to do it by themselves. The rewards are well worth it, as students gradually develop confidence and independence

5. Another major requirement of the subject is to have ongoing reflection. Apart from writing the contract, this is the most difficult part and needs to be taught. I scaffold reflections but also encourage students to slip in a one word/phrase reflection when they are annotating photographs or on post it notes explaining something in their folio. The folio is worth 70% of the final grade and this is where students with special needs can compensate for any difficulties they may have with reflection writing. For the Externally assessed component (30%) Kaye Lee recommends that teachers give key questions initially for topic headings, and then delete them for greater fluency, following through the process of drafting and editing. Reflections can also be recorded orally. A warning – make sure that your scaffolding matches the requirements of the performance standards.

6. Good organisation supports students to be successful. Initially I provide a recycled folder including Title pages for each folio section, Log book, Things to do, Community Contacts page and a Checklist. Students are then expected to replace these with their own designs. I find a Things to do list a useful tool in helping students to become independent workers – students and teachers can add to this list and tick tasks off when completed.

Benefits
• The most obvious one is that it is a major tool within the SACE, supporting students with special needs to gain their certificate. Students can do more than one Community Studies subject and many complete their Stage 2 by only doing Community Studies.
• Because a good contract is based around student interests, abilities and future goals, it particularly supports students such as those with Asperger’s Syndrome who have a special interest, skill or passion allowing them to follow their passions independently.
• Development of independent learning skills.
• Development of confidence in themselves and in community interactions.
• The chance to pursue interests and develop skills leading to future employment.
• A good contract should have realistic but challenging goals; with encouragement and support, students can go beyond what they thought they could do; a very simple goal could be to actually finish something, never having really done that before.
• A well-developed contract develops organisational skills - students know exactly what, when, how long it should take and how they will keep evidence of the activity.
• When students have made a contribution to the community it invariably raises their self esteem. One of the students with dyslexia who had never completed anything and was rarely successful, built a cage for a wombat in a rescue centre, had her photo in the local paper and started walking around with a new air of confidence which was noted by many.

Further information can be found on the SACE website.

Renie Walker
Community Studies teacher, Mitcham Girls HS
Ph 8272 8233
Girls with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) are diagnosed less than boys at a ratio of 4:1 (Attwood, 2006). Due to under-diagnosis or mis-diagnosis, the real ratio may be closer to 2:1 (Attwood, 2009). Many assessment systems have not identified the types of difficulties shown in girls. There needs to be a wider perspective taken and we need to be aware, be observant and ask the right questions.

From an early age, girls camouflage their differences (Attwood, 2006) particularly prior to adolescence when the social messages of the peer cohort become subtler and more difficult to interpret. They are more socially aware than boys, observe and try to understand before acting and develop coping strategies such as hiding and mimicking. Girls in general have stronger communication skills than boys. The skills girls with ASD develop through in social mimicking mask many language difficulties. Although girls have intense special interests, they are usually more socially ‘normal’ than boys’ interests and not as noticeable. What differs from other girls is the quality and intensity of the special interest – not the focus. Girls often have rituals and routines which they are compelled to follow, and can be passive-aggressive about these rituals and change. They are often perfectionists.

EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES
Sensory issues and anxiety add to the difficulties experienced by girls with ASD. Over and/or under reaction to sensory input is very common in girls and is a significant factor in increasing stress and anxiety and in making social situations difficult. It can result in very real physical symptoms particularly in new environments, and, in new social situations etc. Anxiety affects behaviour, mood, tolerance levels, relationships and academic achievement.

Girls experience more social anxiety than boys, and, during adolescence, are at an increased risk of feeling alienated from their peers and experiencing bullying and harassment. Girls’ bullying is generally subtler than that of boys. They employ social intimidation and relational aggression that is more difficult to identify. Girls with ASD do not have social networks to support them and often do not tell anyone. Victims of bullying become depressed and emotionally traumatised. They may be more agitated at home and become moody. They develop poor self-esteem, and a lack of self-confidence, experience increased anxiety and may develop mental health issues as a result of the bullying.

COMMUNICATION
Girls with ASD can have great difficulty explaining themselves, particularly in regard to their feelings, social difficulties and other problems. They will often claim they are sick to avoid situations and problems they cannot explain. Girls and women in society are expected to be social in their communication. Girls with ASD do not ‘do’ social chitchat or make meaningless comments to facilitate social communication, which affects their ability to fit in with the peer group during adolescence. They also have little idea of social hierarchy and how to communicate with people of different status and can inadvertently get themselves into trouble if this is not explained.

SOCIAL UNDERSTANDING
One of the important educational issues arising from the challenges specific to girls include developing social understanding and teaching the ‘hidden curriculum’: the unstated rules or customs that, if not understood, can make the world a confusing place and make one feel isolated (Myles and Duncan, 2007). Judy Endow, a woman with Autism said, “The hidden Curriculum is all the stuff that everybody seems to know, but nobody has ever told you” (2010). It is essential to make teaching the ‘hidden curriculum’ a priority. Supportive peers to explain social rules and positive female role models help develop this knowledge. Girls’ social skills groups geared towards strengths and interests can help girls to learn to successfully interact with others.

INDEPENDENCE AND VULNERABILITY
Girls with ASD are often immature, naive, gullible and easily deceived. They also often maintain a childlike tone of voice that adds to their vulnerability (Attwood, 2010). They lack self confidence and self esteem. They often misunderstand signs of aggression and affection and do not recognise sexual harassment and sexual bullying, putting them at risk of sexual assault, date rape and falling into abusive or controlling relationships.

An important part of any curriculum for girls with ASD is to equip them with the skills and confidence to be independent and protect themselves. To do this we need to teach and develop social skills, social communication skills, cyber safety skills, and emotional awareness. Sex education must include an awareness of gender identity, an understanding of the signs of sexual harassment and assault, an awareness of personal privacy and respect for the privacy of others, permission to say “no” and the ability to self-advocate.

SELF AWARENESS
Girls with ASD need to develop a realistic sense of their personal abilities, qualities and strengths. They also need knowledge of ASD and how it impacts them personally to help them understand why they feel “different”. This will help them recognise and appreciate their own emotional states, needs and perspectives. Positive self-esteem comes through self-awareness and success. Girls with ASD often
enjoy writing and art. They are also great people watchers. Provide opportunities for them to study themselves – their personalities, interests, strengths and accomplishments, to help them develop goals and future plans with a focus on the positive.

It is important to teach girls with ASD to recognise the impact sensory input can have and to develop strategies to deal with any sensory issues before they have a negative impact. They need to learn their personal triggers, what has a calming effect, and be provided with ways of defusing situations that can provoke extreme anxiety.

**TEACHING GIRLS WITH ASD**

Girls with ASD often do not achieve academically as well as they could. The challenges already mentioned often lead to girls dropping out of school or failing to achieve their full potential. Developing social understanding, self awareness and coping skills is crucial to academic success.

Although girls with ASD may be intelligent and have good skills in some areas, they can also experience learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) that impact their academic potential if not addressed. Generally rather than act out or disrupt, their reaction is to fail to complete tasks or leave the room to avoid the situation. This could be due to a lack of understanding, or a lack of skills or feeling completely overwhelmed.

Girls with ASD also often have many strengths. They can be very artistic, have good written expression, and enjoy reading, drama and the study of languages and people. Find and foster these strengths and interests.

It is essential to tactfully check for understanding as girls often will not ask for help, or tell you they have problems. They are reluctant to draw attention to themselves and appear “dumb” of different in the eyes of teachers and peers. Pre-teaching can overcome this by promoting better understanding, increasing confidence and improving their status with their peers.

The future for girls with ASDs should be positive, and as educators we cannot let a lack of understanding, knowledge and support affect this. We need to provide an education that has a focus on skills needed by girls, teaches the ‘hidden curriculum’, addresses self esteem, mental health and independence and which fosters strengths and talents.

**Useful Readings and Websites**

**Readings**

Girls Under the Umbrella of Autism Spectrum Disorders – Emsberger & Wendel

Aspergirls – Rudy Simone

Girls Growing Up On The Autism Spectrum – Nichols, Moravick & Tetenbaum

Aspergers and Girls – Attwood et al

Middle School: The Stuff Nobody Tells you About – Haley Moss

The Hidden Curriculum – Brenda Smith Myles

**Autobiographies**

Pretending to be Normal – Liane Holliday Willey

Congratulations! It’s Asperger Syndrome – Jen Birch

Finding a Different kind of Normal – Jeanette Purkis

Asparagus Dreams – Jessica Peers

Thinking in Pictures – Temple Grandin

Life Behind Glass – Wendy Lawson

Standing Down Falling Up: Asperger’s Syndrome from the Inside Out - Nita Jackson

**Websites**

http://www.mindsandhearts.net/
www.autism.org.uk
http://www.aspergerssyndrome.org/
http://templegrandin.com/
http://www.mugsy.org/wendy/ (Wendy Lawson)
http://www.help4aspergers.com/ (Rudy Simone)
http://taniaannmarshall.wordpress.com/

Pam Jacobs
jaco0042@uni.flinders.edu.au

---

**The SERU Developmental Learning Centre**

The physical changes include new red metal shelving which affords easier viewing, access and storage for the range of resources. The room has been repainted a deep grey that contrasts against the colourful shelving and resources. Improvements still to be implemented include a new door with a large glass insert for increased visibility/light into the DLC. The changes will be ongoing during this year and we are looking forward to feedback from our borrowers.

The focus within the DLC is on specialised resources to meet the current borrowing trends. The jigsaw and sensory collections have been updated with a focus on the developmental learning stages. The socio-dramatic play area has new packs collated around themes and the gross motor collection has also been reviewed.

In the coming months there will be an extension of the currently restricted Switch Adapted Resources through the ongoing purchase of new items. The collection will be increased and updated allowing for the current borrowing criteria to include other learners requiring cause and effect items.

All of the DLC resources have been reviewed and old, worn or rarely borrowed items have been removed. Research and purchasing of new and similar resources has been occurring and this will be a continuous process.
Nuriootpa High School (NHS) is situated in the Barossa Valley, 70 km from Adelaide. The school hosts a Disability Unit, which is a regional facility that currently caters for 37 students with severe and multiple disabilities. NHS has an enrolment of 850 students and, approximately 10% have an NEP. Students who transition from primary school to Nuriootpa High School have their literacy skills assessed by reviewing their schooling record, NEP and undertaking a variety of tests. Varying levels of support are provided in English classes. The Everyday English/ Reading class caters for students who fall between the Unit English and mainstream Literacy Support classes. It is a Special Education class providing an intensive literacy support program, based on each student’s need. Students in this class have Reading Ages ranging from 10.5 years to below 6 years, and most have an NEP. These students are drawn from both Mainstream and Disability Unit classes and the disabilities may include Autism Spectrum Disorder, Auditory Processing Disorder, Attention Deficit Disorder, Dyslexia, Intellectual, Language and Communication.

As noted in articles by Barry Carpenter and Jo Egerton in the SERU Update (2nd edition 2013) the number of students falling into this category has increased in recent years in most developed countries. At NHS this resulted in very large Everyday English/ Reading classes, sometimes more than 20 students. Presently the class sizes are based on the Intensive English Class recommendations.

Everyday English/ Reading classes in previous years presented the THRASS program (Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills), Jane Tanner spelling program and the Lexile Reading scheme to students requiring remedial literacy and language programs. This was very successful and the students benefitted greatly from being involved in those lessons. Often students were able to progress from this class into mainstream classes. Over the last few years the student numbers for this class have ballooned and the class became increasingly weighted towards students requiring intensive phonics skills. The programs we were using no longer catered for the needs of many of these students, as the work presented was too difficult due to their limited literacy skills (decoding and encoding). Another resource was needed to cater for those students with very limited phonic skills.

Nuriootpa High School investigated other schemes, which would complement our existing resources, to help dyslexic students and those with specific learning difficulties. The school looked for a resource that would provide continuity, monitor student progress and give a strong foundation for building phonics knowledge. After, viewing resources at Special Education Resource Unit (SERU) and SPELD and speaking with teachers at other sites, NHS purchased the UK based scheme called Wordshark 4. It draws on a number of literacy programs, including the ‘Alpha to Omega’ program, specifically designed to support those students with dyslexia. Wordshark 4 was purchased as a computer network program (10 User Network Licence). Student progress is monitored and tasks are completed at their own pace and level. It has 55 games linked to phonics, alphabet, reading and spelling objectives. There are 9,000 pre-recorded words and sounds arranged over 6 courses to help students read and spell. Teachers may also create their own spelling lists to present to students.

Wordshark 4 contains several courses: Letters and Sounds (introducing letters, words and sentences), Literacy Hour (based on the English Government’s Literacy Framework and is useful for junior aged children), Short course to support different phonic schemes (can be used independently or to support different phonic teaching schemes), Secondary Subject Lists (covers vocabulary from 13 curriculum subjects and includes words in context), General Course for older users/ adults (makes no reference to the user’s age). It uses sound, graphics and text in a multi-sensory approach to teach and reinforce reading and spelling skills. It is aimed at students of all abilities between the ages of 5 and 15, with a special focus on assisting those with specific learning difficulties.

The games forms the main teaching component and help develop reading and spelling skills which include segmenting and blending, common letter patterns, prefixes, suffixes, roots, word division, high frequency words, using words in context, alphabet and dictionary skills. These visual strategies are highly engaging and the students are enthusiastic in completing Wordshark 4 lessons.

Students receive immediate feedback on whether an answer is correct and they are motivated to continue trying until they get it right. There are reward games which act as a ‘break’ during the lesson. Word lists can be modified and other components can be changed to meet the individual needs of students, such as varying the speed of the games, changing fonts and background colours, switching off any games and controlling sound.

An important element is tracking each student’s progress which is then used to inform teaching. The information from lessons shows words or sounds covered, games played and how long it took to continued
Wordshark 4 provides a systematic, sequential approach to phonics, vocabulary and spelling instruction—teaching how to spell and not just what to spell. It complements our existing resources for teaching students with learning difficulties such as dyslexia. Students in this class may have low self-esteem, lack confidence, poor concentration, behavioural problems, low frustration levels (melt down moments), language difficulties and specific learning problems. Wordshark 4 has allowed these students to enjoy learning, providing higher engagement resulting in improved learning outcomes.

Peter Temme
Special Education teacher, Nurioopta High School
Ph 8562 2022

NOW AND NEXT TRANSITION PLANNING PROGRAM IN THE RIVERLAND

All students with disabilities require a strong Transition Planning mechanism, which provides an all-inclusive approach to undertaking the change from school to adult life in a smooth and purposeful manner. Secondary schools in rural areas do not have access to full-time Transition Centres to refer students on to, as metropolitan Adelaide schools have, so school staff in rural areas all have to establish their own ways of going about helpful transitioning processes.

Riverland Special School (RSS), located in Berri in the Riverland district of S.A, commenced their ‘Now and Next’ Transition Pathway Planning Program in 2012, to more fully address the questions of “where is the student now, what needs to happen next, and with whom might this young person engage to fulfill their needs, interests and life-potential?” If these questions aren’t adequately addressed and acted upon during the final years at school, too many students with intellectual, physical and social difficulties slip into isolation, depression and/or anti-social behaviour when they leave school without having any clear steps for living, working and engaging satisfyingly within their local community.

The RSS Now and Next program involves all those local individuals and organizations who may affect, and be affected by, the young person’s transition to post-school life. Students, the young people themselves, are given a central position in the meetings, which are designed to identify what they want, need and are able to do. Prospective community partners are directly involved in informing young people and their families and carers about the resources, support, employment, training and alternative pathways available in their local area. Parents and carers have the opportunity to see a broader picture of precisely what the future capabilities, possibilities and necessities are for the young people in their care.

The 2012 Now and Next partnership process began with the DECD school (Riverland Special School), DECD Disability Co-ordinators from the Murray-Mallee Regional Office, Disability Services South Australia (Department for Communities and Social Inclusion), the local Partnership Broker at School and Beyond Inc. and the National Disability Coordination Officer Program (NDCO, Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education) trialling meetings for students, armed with their current information about appropriate support, training and social organisations for a range of life-options. Local Disability Employment Service (DES) agencies and other organisations have subsequently come on board at the students’, families’ or an advocate’s request, as more became known about different young peoples’ intentions and requirements, and as a result of everyone involved being able to share more knowledge about what the local community may have to offer.

Each student’s partnership team engages in regular review meetings until all requirements have been met to enable the student to confidently proceed with a satisfying life beyond school. Importantly, all involved have accountable actions to perform along the way, to achieve the goals and appropriate levels of support each young person aspires to. Some students may require review meetings every term over 3 or 4 years; others’ plans may fall into place more quickly and with fewer meetings. In 2012 RSS started 20 students on the Now & Next path, and in 2013 we have 32 students engaged in the process.

The school, while continuing to have an important guiding role in their students’ final years of secondary education, can now gradually relinquish its pivotal function in students’ lives. The Now & Next program addresses this difficult challenge that special school students and their families and carers have, in their reliance upon the school as a centre not only of education, but also of promoting their social lives and community involvement. By taking the transition process beyond the school grounds, and involving people outside the staff of the school, it signifies the ending of one part of the young person’s life and the beginning of another - for which students and carers can now become better and more confidently prepared, throughout this over-arching ‘Now & Next’ attention upon all relevant (and often, compounding) issues in their lives.

continued
Many intellectually-impaired students are capable of holding down jobs in open employment if they have specific training and adequate supervision. Some will require more intensive job training and supervision through a Disability Employment Service. Some will be well-satisfied with full- or part-time work on productivity-based wages at Orana in Loxton. There are others who are not able to do paid work and will require a suitable day-options program which offers interesting and worthwhile activities. Amongst all of these young people, there are those who may require a huge shift into supported or supervised accommodation within their local community - if such places exist, and common to them all is the difficulty in accessing transport, after being used to catching a bus from their door every school day.

Now & Next partners involved in the RSS program eagerly spread the word of the success of this transitioning process to Co-ordinators at local mainstream high schools, and supported them to trial similar transition programs for disengaged students and students with special needs in their schools. The following story from Jane Trower at Loxton High School is a wonderful example of how powerful a genuine ‘Now & Next’ style transition process can be:-

“The biggest thing is the "emotional" stuff: really bringing home the connections made through the process, and the difference it makes in a young person’s life.”

In 2012 we had one student go the journey; this process wasn't the formal (RSS) Now and Next but a variation. After one year (4 meetings) our student went from school being the only place for him, to being enrolled in a Small Motors course, a literacy program (ICAN FLO) and having options for his future. Along the way he left home and moved to specialized assisted accommodation and is currently living independently with his brother with significant home support. He has also secured employment at Orana! The team of people working around him helped plan a clear vision for his future.

Having established a relationship with the student and knowing the important facts surrounding why he was not at school, his family situation and his past history, I modelled how to talk with the student and also how to support him in staying calm and engaged in the meetings. As each meeting went on my role changed from being actively involved to taking a back seat. This experience has demonstrated that the actual transition process does most definitely work!

There was also a huge transformation noticed in the student's appearance and demeanour: he initially presented as an angry young person in Term 1, changing to a calm and engaging person who could express and articulate his thoughts in a calm and clear manner, it was truly amazing! At the end of 2012 the formal Now and Next Transition program was commenced for three other students. This year another three Year 11 students have been included."

RSS staff, and Co-ordinators from the other high schools recognise that this transition process is not for all students verified under the Students with Disabilities policy, but a fantastic mechanism for those who require some extra support to focus upon developing a personal plan and seeing it through. It is highly adaptable to suit disengaged students, and could also be modified to assist primary students make the transition to secondary school. The strengths and benefits of Now and Next outweigh the challenges experienced in making it a sustainable program, such as lacking the assurance of adequate funding, losing partners when their short-term funding periods end, and ways in which the “goal-posts” shift when there is good headway. For example, increases in TAFE course fees have curtailed local training options. Additionally, DES agencies have had to clamp down this year on engaging with students before their final year of school, yet longer-term relationships and more processing time are essential for many of our young people to achieve “work-readiness”. The battle continues with the obstacles, but this is a program of immense benefit in developing pathways for students with disabilities in our rural area.

Rosemary Sandow
Co-ordinator, Riverland Special School
Ph 8582 1258

Thanks to Jane Trower, Loxton High School, & Kristen White, Waikerie High School, for editorial assistance.

---

Organisation is like an extra subject area – it needs to be taught.

Learning to be organised is a critical skill that must be directly and relentlessly taught and reinforced if students are to become independent and in control of their own learning.

HOW TO SUPPORT STUDENTS WITH ASD IN THE SECONDARY SETTING

Currently in Australia one in every one hundred students are on the Autism Spectrum with a far greater prevalence in males than females. Through the application of specific teaching strategies, and a conscious strength based focus, students on the spectrum can achieve great successes in all educational settings.

Students on the Autism Spectrum present with unique strengths and challenges which become highly evident in the secondary setting. Characteristics may include difficulties with social communication, social interaction, restricted and repetitive behaviours and difficulties with sensory processing. In addition, people on the spectrum often have difficulties with organisation, time management, planning and prioritising due to Executive Dysfunction.

Students on the Autism Spectrum often have great strength in visual reasoning, rote memory, logical thinking and working within systems, meaning that they often excel in concert subjects. Through the use of visual supports, such as checklists, schedules and timers, students can engage in, and complete tasks in a concise, independent and sequenced manner. By utilising technology, such as laptops and IPad’s, difficulties with fine motor can be overcome so that students can produce work to a high quality improving self-esteem.

Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder are often ‘refreshingly frank’ and often have a ‘different’ perception on the world. This unique perception can mean that people around them are exposed to a world though different angles.

For someone on the spectrum, understanding the ‘unwritten’ social world can often be both difficult and anxiety provoking. Through the use of Social Stories ©, Comic Strip Conversations ©, and programs such as ‘The Incredible 5-Point Scale’, professionals are able to enhance individuals Theory of Mind allowing them to see others perspective and adjust behaviour accordingly.

One of the unique characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder is the intense focus on a particular area, often known as their ‘special interest’. This ability to apply a significant amount of time and energy on such a narrow area often leads to the extraordinary acquisition of knowledge on a specific topic or concept. Individuals may engage their special interest to reduce anxiety, provide pleasure or to make sense of their often chaotic world. It is useful for educators to identify an individual’s special interests and try to incorporate, if appropriate, into the curriculum to increase motivation.

‘For some people, it is like fitting a square peg into a round hole. For me at the moment, the hole (the school) has changed its shape slightly to accommodate me and the square peg (me) has tried to soften its edges, so a better description would be a rounded square trying to fit itself into a circle with sticky-out bits!’ - Luke Jackson

‘Supporting Students on the Autism Spectrum in the High School Setting’ is a frequently run workshop through Autism SA. It offers up-to-date information and resources and offers participants practical ideas to support their students’. For more information and to register for workshops visit www.autismsa.org.au and follow the links to the ‘Professional Learning Series’.

Niki Welz  
Education & Training Officer  
Autism SA  
Ph 8462 0638

DEVELOPING THE LEARNING MIND: TURNING YOUR MIND OFF AND BEING CALM

Turning parts of you mind on and off to improve learning may seem like science fiction, but a famous experiment in Australia (Snyder, 2003 & 2004) has helped change the way neuroscientists and psychologists look at the mind. With the use of repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS) over the left fronto-temporal lobe, Snyder and colleagues turned off this section of the brain, allowing subjects to significantly improve skill in artistic drawing and literal memory.

Inadvertently, we turn aspects of our brain/mind off all the time. This is known as inhibition. Inhibition is a neuro-psychological function that is not often talked about in education. In this day and age, we are more interested in turning things on in our brains to excite us and invigorate learning rather than turning things off.

We have many inhibitory controls within our brain which we are not aware of, but are very important to our own state of mind. A simple test is putting your pointer finger in front of your eyes and studying the tip. Observe the richness of detail in your own friction ridges, the curved lines which make arches, loops, and whorls that make your finger print unique. Look for possible blemishes in colour or unevenness in the epidermal layer covering the tip of your finger. The level of depth and detail of information around a specific item increases every time I provide you with another factor of analysis-did you realise that this distracted you from things going
on around you! This is because despite how powerful your brain is - it is only as powerful as the understood input that you have received and attended to from your senses. Our perceptual input restricts us in really understanding the reality around us. If we did, we probably would go crazy from the information overload! The human mind has evolved over millennia to become a pattern-seeking machine so that it can adapt to any environment that it may be in by keeping out significant amounts of unnecessary information.

It is possible to state that constructivism is evolving into a scientific form as neuroscientists are showing us how much we ‘construct’ from our rich personal memories, socio-cultural experiences and perceptions to develop our very own personal virtual filter from a very young age. As our psychological self matures, we use confirmation bias to help keep in things that we unconsciously want and not want out of our minds. Consequently, our minds are changing rich raw detail into symbolic chunks, relationships and patterns. As we interact with others, we unconsciously begin choosing what valued judgements are important to us, as a result of the social world that we personally have been brought up in or want to live in. No wonder when we do try to retrieve memories they are not lower level raw detail, but snapshots and symbols.

This is good however, as the human mind is filtering the infinite scope of reality into something that we can actually learn, comprehend, and cope with. As teachers, we help students find and make patterns and relationships in the material that they continually learn.

Some highly reputed theories behind autism suggests that some of these inhibitory controls are actually turned off, allowing too much input into the minds of the autistic. Resulting consequences are diverse with some sufferers turning themselves off entirely to the outside social and/or communicative world, some may create a physical or sensory locus of distraction (hand flapping, ear-stroking, head tapping) while others may immerse themselves into the rich raw detailed world of a cognitive domain thus becoming savant-like. A savant is an expert or prodigious talent in a cognitive domain; they are not necessarily masters of their own learning. They may not be able to synthesize or discern information across disciplines, or provide an adequate social or emotional output (commentary) to their work. They can however, reciprocate specific raw information accurately, like copying a print of the Mona Lisa or computing and reciting dates over the last decade. This is because they are ‘tunnel tasking’ where they are shutting out all other information (including you!) as irrelevant.

If we want to turn parts of our mind on to invigorate learning, we must also learn how to turn parts off. How often as individuals do we digress, get distracted, or overwhelmed by things around us. This is because we are receiving more signals, information, and sensory input than we have ever had in the existence of our species.

The following two strategies should give you a glimpse in how ‘shutting down’ or ‘shutting off’ can improve cognitive performance:

- While doing a lesson in a subject like Mathematics or English, stop and do something unrelated. Have a two minute toilet or drink break. Play an unrelated game. The psychological importance is that it gives the student the impression that the task is now completed, although the unconscious mind will be churning over the learnt material. Return to the main lesson and you will see higher order skills like problem solving, synthesis and creativity come to the fore.

- Have a consistent time/period of the week when you conduct tests for your students. When they are not performing a test, get them to use this time as a relaxation period where they do very little, with dimmed lighting, and listen to calming music. You are developing a routine that is affecting the student’s body clock and ability to relax, but also timing as to when they will next be assessed.

There are always going to be cynics to aspects of educational neuroscience who may state that general strategies, like those listed above, cannot really affect the complexities of the human mind. However, many people are aware of generally known factors like diet, health, exercises, sleep and drinking lots of water can all contribute in developing the optimum mind for learning.

Richard Davidson, a neuroscientist, states the environment is one of the key states for brain health: ‘the genes load the gun, but only the environment can pull the trigger.’ (Davidson, 2012, 97) The environment does not just shape behaviour and brain function but affects which genes are turned on or off, and therefore which inherited traits we express. Our brains are adapting and protecting us all of the time, even when we are not aware of it. Words spoken to us prime our bodies and minds. An important study into mind and asthma for example, demonstrated that words like wheeze and suffocate are so emotionally charged that they elicited a cascade of activity, first in the brain and then in the body (Rosenkranz & Davidson, 2009) of asthma sufferers demonstrating that emotional stress can be a significant trigger.

As educators, we are regularly concerned with putting more content and devices into our lessons to motivate our students. However like at home and in their recreational lives, children need to turn continued
off and relax. If we can help students to turn off at times, rather than excite even more, they may be less charged to distracters, digressions, and distress.

References

AN INTEGRATED SERVICES PROJECT: YOUNG PEOPLE IN RESIDENTIAL CARE AND SPECIAL EDUCATION RESOURCE UNIT (SERU)

In 2012 a pilot project was established by Integrated Service Improved Outcomes (ISIO) to explore the educational experiences and outcomes of young people in residential care. The project was to trial alternative approaches for learners to access and engage in education from a range of residential care settings. In October, Liz Barber, Project Manager ISIO, contacted SERU to discuss the possibility of staff from residential care units borrowing resources to support learners who are living in residential care and have learning difficulties or disabilities.

This was the beginning of an innovative integrated service partnership project involving two SERU Project Officers, Student, Aboriginal and Family Services, and the staff from the Residential Care Directorate, Families SA, which evolved with the aim to provide positive learning experiences for young people in care through a joint initiative.

Two initiatives were established following the first meetings between SERU staff and Sam Armitage, Program Manager Residential Care Directorate to provide support to the carers of these young people:

- SERU would support the program by providing specialized inclusive learning resources to promote re-engagement in individual learning programs with appropriate adjustments to meet needs related to disability/learning difficulty.
- A model of professional learning delivery would be established including professional learning sessions at SERU and individual consultations with SERU staff.

SERU’s Assistant Manager and Project Officers met with key staff at two of the Residential Care units. The purpose was to collect information on the targeted learners, current contexts, programs and resources utilised.

A survey was developed for completion by senior supervisors and youth workers to obtain anonymous information related to targeted learners. Many of these young people have experienced extreme trauma and a high percentage have special needs.

This information included the disability/learning difficulty diagnosis, current NEP goals, academic programs, attendance, participation in alternative programs and strengths/interests. The information gathered ensured the planning and development of professional learning sessions that were targeted, relevant and included appropriate SERU service and resources.

The Program Manager Residential Care informed SERU staff that a space had become available at the Kilburn Flexi Centre on Wednesdays for youth workers to take students to work on planned learning activities. A project partnership was developed, which aims to:

- Offer intensive support for dis-engaged learners in Residential Care who have disabilities and learning difficulties and are not attending schooling.
- Establish ongoing consultation process between relevant SERU personnel and the Residential Care staff in order to develop individualised learning supports/programs and professional learning for staff.
- Maintain a comprehensive evaluation process that clearly outlines key performance outcomes and identifies areas for improvement.

The Professional learning modules were presented at SERU with contributions from other SERU services. The key areas were:

- Disabilities under DECD policy and the DDA
- Implications of specific disabilities/learning difficulties for engagement and learning
- Information on the disabilities identified by residential care units
- Implications of disability/learning difficulty re engagement, behavior and learning

continued
• Information from other SERU services – Communication Support Service, Early Intervention Service Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inclusive Technology Service provided further details of implications and relevant strategies.

Other DECD services and post school options were also identified by the PO’s and connections between these services were made, for example, Daws Rd Centre and certificate courses available through private service providers.

Further professional learning sessions will be developed based on case studies identified by residential care staff. Project Officers will also continue to connect with residential care staff regarding utilising inclusive learning resources and to provide professional support to address the individual learning needs of the young people in care.

Dymphna James  Assistant Manager
Anne Creighton-Arnold, Project Officer Teaching and Learning Resources
Kerry Papadopoulos, Project Officer Teaching and Learning Resources
SERU

RESOURCES RELATED TO THE TOPIC

Teaching Exceptional, Diverse and At Risk Students in the General Education Classroom (3rd ed.). Vaughn, S. et al. 2003. 34.0203.01
This text provides teachers with information and practical strategies for students with disabilities and others at risk. The book provides learning activities and sample lessons for both primary and secondary classrooms as well as a unit on curriculum adaptations, with specific strategies and activities for teaching reading, writing, mathematics and content area.

When the Brain Can’t Hear: Unraveling the Mystery of Auditory Processing Disorder. Bellis, T. 2002. 17.0179.01
This book aims to and provides answers to questions about Auditory Processing Disorder (APD). It discusses how APD can affect a person’s speech, reading, receptive language, problem solving and social skills.

Survival Reading Skills for Secondary Students. Miller, W. 2003. 63.3019.01
This book focuses on students in years 5 -12 who have previously been adequate/good readers, but who increasingly struggle in responding to non-fiction texts at the interpretive and critical levels as they move into secondary school.

Talkabout Relationships is part of a series, focuses on developing and improving self esteem and relationship skills in people who experience difficulties in making or maintaining friends.

Success At Work: Looking Good The Importance of Personal Appearance & Presentation. McMurtie, C. 2004. 66.1120.01
This book of black line masters is one in the series Success at Work. It emphasises that each person must take responsibility for the care of the body, the importance of appearance, daily washing and dressing routine and that these tasks must become routine and be performed in sequence.

This title is one in a series of six books which provide two types of lessons: instructional and behavioural. It contains one-page lessons with each sentence supported by one or more pictures. The instructional lessons are intended to teach learners what they need to do or say in social situations that can often be overwhelming to students with Autism. See also: 19.0068.01.01 Managing Behaviour; 19.0068.02.01 Vocational; 19.0068.04.01 Health & Hygiene; 19.0068.05.01 Secondary Schools; 19.0068.06.01 Safety.

Right To Know Module 2: Puberty For Girls. Down Syndrome Association. 2004. 66.1144.03
This book is part of the Right to Know series and contains photocopiable pages. This covers female puberty, mensturation, personal hygiene management and management of issues related to puberty within the context of appropriate public and private behaviour.

Day To Day Life Skills Speaking. McPeek-Glisen, E. 2002. 66.1199.01
This book, suitable for learners between 11 and 17 years of age, targets life skills using activities that connect learning to real world situations. It focuses on everyday life situations in which people use language to express needs, obtain information and interact with others in social situations.

continued
Becoming a Woman. Cooper, E. 1999. 66.0751.01
This resource is aimed at educating those who work with people with learning disabilities, and the young women themselves. It is designed to inform people who have a learning disability about what will happen when they begin mensuration, as well as changes that may occur.

This book provides information on why dyslexic students frequently underachieve and demonstrates that adjustments in teaching and learning methods can make a difference, provided the underlying problems are identified.

Personal Relationships : Illustrated Colour Cards. Speechmark Publishing. 2002. 66.1166.01
This pack of coloured pictures depicting 48 different situations, illustrates how relationships develop and the different kinds and levels of relationships. Some cards illustrate the different stages of an intimate relationship developing over time and other cards illustrate family situations, different groupings of friends and some professional relationships.

This book was designed to assist learners between 10 and 17 years of age to strengthen listening, vocabulary and critical thinking skills relevant to daily life experiences.

The Special Education Teacher’s Intervention Resource. Mattes, L. 2003. 34.0345.01
This reference book is a collection of lists, forms and resources designed for use in developing instructional programs for learners with special needs. It also contains resources for teaching reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar and social skills.

Beat Dyslexia 1 Revised. Franks, E. et al. 2008. 63.3210.01
The revised Beat Dyslexia series of books have been designed to assist learners experiencing difficulty in reading, writing or spelling. The program uses a structured, multi-sensory approach with a controlled vocabulary. The accompanying CD provides the auditory input of the program with exercises on sound recognition in words, short-term memory training, dictation and listening comprehension.

See also: 63321002 (2); 63321003 (3); 63321004 (4); 63321005 (5)

Talisman Series Books 1-12. Reis-Frankfort, T. 63.3377.01
The Totem Series, is aimed at older learners who would benefit from going back to the beginning of learning the Phonic Code. The series begins with CV C and CVCC words and includes consonant digraphs and some of the alternative vowel spelling. See also: Talisman Series 1 63337601; Talisman Series 2 63337602; Totem Series 63337701.

Talisman 2 Series Book 1-10. Reis-Frankfort, T. 2011. 63.3376.02
This is a phonics based series. Each book gradually more difficult, ending with complex suffixes. The workbook is based on the stories and includes a variety of activities.

Working Together: Linking Skills & Curriculum for Adolescents with a Language Learning Disability. Brent, M. & Millgate-Smith, C. 17.0328.01
Written by a secondary teacher and a speech pathologist, this book describes the key factors that impact on LLD students in the classroom. It offers detailed advice on sequencing learning and skill development strategies to assist LLD students to access mainstream curriculum successfully.

DVD Model ME Conversation Cues 66138401
This DVD features Middle and High School aged learners demonstrating social skills at school and in the community. Each conversation skill is demonstrated more than once and in a variety of environments. This is useful for learners with Asperger Syndrome and Autism.

The Star Quest stories provide high interest low vocabulary action-packed adventures for students with a reading age 6–7. The Teaching Guide provides photocopiable worksheets for each of the chapter books to reinforce comprehension, spelling, writing and grammar skills.

Runway Series Set 2. West, J. 2009. 63.3382.02
This high interest/low vocabulary series is designed to provide stories in a variety of genres for girls. The books have been written for girls aged 9–14 with reading ages of between 7–8 years old. The Teaching Guide contains a section of ideas and activities for each of the books in the series.

See also: 633.3382.01.01 Runway Series Set 1.

This book describes key issues related to attention deficit disorders and school success and provides information critical to understanding ADD/ADHD during the middle and high school years.

Rip Rap Reading Pack Level B. Keen, J. 2009. 63.3261.02
The novels in this pack are targeted at upper primary to middle school students who require high interest low vocabulary materials. It is a phonics based based programme and includes topics such a bullying, homelessness, family break up and disability.

At Work Beginner. Weston, F. 2010. 66.1511.01
This workbook contains reproducible pages which is designed to assist students to understand workplace practices and develop the language and numeracy they need at work. It includes an audio cd of recordings developed to support extra practice. See also 66.1511.02 Finding Work.
**SPOTLIGHT ON JOURNAL ARTICLES**

**Intervention In School and Clinic, Vol 48, No. 3.**

**Navigating the Evidence –Based Practice Maze: Resources for Teachers of Secondary Students With Disabilities.** V.L. Mazzotti, et al.

It is important that teachers choose and implement practices that have proven successful for secondary students with disabilities when determining what resources to use in planning for post school success. This article guides teachers through the process of navigating the evidence-based practice (EBP) maze to identify EBP’s and programs for secondary students. It discussed the need to follow a research-based framework, use practices with the best available research evidence and use data-based decision making to guide use of EBP.

**Ostracism and Adolescents With Learning and Behavioural Disabilities: Preventing and Lessening Its Effects.** Zambo, D., and Carter, D.

As we know, bullying is serious, hurtful and part of many students lives. This article looks at bullying when ostracism occurs, the complete shutting out of another. The article describes ostracism as leaving no visible scars, but leaves psychological and emotional pain and cases of ostracism are increasing in number, intensity and duration. The article looks at why it matters to adolescents and how it can be prevented and its effects lessened.


This article provides a framework that includes four knowledge bases that special education teachers should develop and expand upon as a way to improve their instructions for diverse learners in mathematics. These are Content Knowledge, Learner Characteristics, Technological Knowledge and Pedagogical Knowledge. There are many evidence-based, high-quality resources and materials available for teachers, and the article provides a list of these for each knowledge base.

**Intervention in School and Clinic Vol 48, No 4.**

**Special Issue: The Critical Role of a Strong Tier 2 System.**

This edition features six articles that describe how one school implemented Tier 2 systems to address the needs of struggling students in reading, math, writing and behaviour. It aims at helping schools better understand how to start with implementing a strong Tier 2 system within the context of a multitiered service delivery model. Tier 1 is intervention synonymous with general education instruction and Tier 2 includes interventions for students who are unable to meet performance –level targets in Tier 1. Tier 3 is synonymous with special education and provides highly individualised, intensive intervention to students with disabilities. The aim of multitiered service delivery models is that students who struggle can be identified early and receive intervention.

**Embedding ‘Clickers’ into Classroom Instruction: Benefits and Strategies.** Blood, E and Gulchak, D.

‘Clickers’ are an instructional tool which aims to engage and motivate students and improve teaching and learning. Students use a small hand-held device to respond to questions posed by the teacher and the responses are displayed on a screen for the class to see. This article describes the benefits for teachers and students in using ‘Clickers’ and how to get started. It also includes ten strategies to embed Clickers into classroom instruction.

See the Current Awareness supplement to order these articles and more.
Secondary Tools for the Writing Process

This edition of Techbits focusses on some very powerful writing tools that can support students with the writing process in secondary settings.

Note Taking and Research

AudioNote
AudioNote is a flexible note taking app where students can insert text, highlights, drawings and images. It also has the capability to record audio which is automatically indexed with whatever was inserted at the time. In essence, it is the same concept as the Livescribe digital pen where your notes highlight the text, drawings and photos highlight as they playback the audio recording. There are a number of similar apps but this one has the additional feature of modifying the playback speed of the audio recording.

Claro PDF
There are numerous PDF apps available but Claro PDF is being featured due to its accessibility features. It has a built in human quality Australian voice which is highly customisable. It even has a Speak in Background option to listen to the text while viewing another app. The background colour of the document can changed to enhance reading. It has a comprehensive yet simply designed annotation toolbar which includes the ability to add photos.

iReadWrite
iReadWrite has been released by TextHELP – the company which produces software for students and adults with learning difficulties. It features a phonetic spell checker, a homophone checker and a dictionary (with many of the terms supported with pictures). It has built in human quality Australian voices that can be utilised within the document and all the support features. The text to speech is highly configurable and supports dual-colour highlighting. Its most impressive feature is the highly sophisticated word prediction tool which suggests based upon phonetics and context.

iWordQ
iWordQ features some unique settings to support students with both writing and reading modes. It has an intelligent word prediction engine and text entry is supported with abbreviation-expansion. The vocabulary database allows the ability to enter terms and definitions of word usage. This particularly enhances homonym support. During the proof reading process, a user can go back over the text and be offered alternative words from the prediction window by tapping and holding on a word.

The reading mode has been cleverly designed to support students in various reading modes – whether it is proofreading, reading to learn, silent reading or reading aloud. The app highlights chunks of text as it dims the remainder of the screen to enhance the readability of the text and guide students through the comprehension process. In many ways it is similar to a teleprompter appearance. iWordQ features high quality British voices for text to speech support.

WriteOnline
The WriteOnline app is based upon the similar principles to the software version. This word processor integrates the two key features of word prediction and wordbar access to provide students with extensive support during the writing process. The word prediction database contains 30,000 common words used in writing. It offers highly accurate suggestions as the database populates words based upon common spelling errors and words most likely to be contextually and grammatically correct.

The wordbar feature provides access to word banks designed for vocabulary support. The topic words can be categorised in alphabetical tabs or according to a set criteria. The word bars can also be designed as writing frames which can contain sentence starters and other phrases to support students in constructing various text types. Wordbars can be created within the app. Like its software version*, creating wordbars is a very straightforward process and generating an A-Z collection of topic words from a piece of text takes seconds.

There is text to speech support with a high quality Australian voice. WriteOnline utilises the iPad keyboard for text entry, thereby providing students access to different international keyboards, accented characters and voice to text input with the microphone button.

*The next version of WriteOnline Desktop/Web Edition will soon be released and it will include a wordbar export function to make support materials compatible with the app version.
**Life Skills**

A life skills curriculum approach blends academic, daily living, personal/social and occupational skills into lessons designed to assist students to learn to function independently in society. The following skills are some that have been identified: Managing Personal Finances; Selecting and Managing a Household; Caring for Personal Needs; Safety Awareness; Preparing and Consuming Food; Buying and Caring for Clothes; Responsible Citizenship; Using Recreational Facilities and Leisure Activities; Getting Around the Community; Achieving Socially Responsible Behaviour; Interpersonal Skills; Selecting and Planning Occupational Choices; Exhibiting Appropriate Work Habits and Behaviour; Seeking, Securing and Maintaining Employment. (Brolin, 1989)

SERU has a wide range of life skill resources.

A small representation of these resources is detailed below.

---

**The Achieve! series of Life Skills titles was developed for educators who require additional activities for learners who are struggling with literacy in Years 7–10, and have a reading age of six to nine years. Each book in the Achieve! Series has been designed and written for secondary students who have low-level literacy skills and require modified classroom activities to fully participate in the curriculum.**

The photocopyable pages can be edited to customise the material for individual students or classes and curriculum requirements and can also be used for revision, assessment and homework. Teacher’s notes provides suggestions for teacher on preparations for their students for each unit of work. The supporting CD-ROM contains all the pages that are featured in the books.

**Personal Finance** (66.1557.01.03) provides a range of tasks that will assist learners in understanding how to manage their money. The units of work focus on topics about the mechanics of managing money, as well as on philosophical issues such as being an ethical consumer and considering what “worth” and “value” mean.

**Careers and Economic Understanding** (66.1539.02.01) provides a range of tasks that are designed to assist learners in understanding issues to do with jobs, careers and business in the twenty-first century. The topics include information about jobs, skills for life, quizzes, what a business is, being your own boss, working from home, volunteer work, teamwork and leadership.

SERU also has other titles in the Achieve! Series in the areas of: Design & Material Technology, English, Geography, Science and Maths.

---

The **Attainment** series is a picture-based hands-on life skill range of resources with Teacher’s Guides and corresponding student materials covering personal care; housekeeping; shopping, cooking and dining out. Each Teacher’s Guide is in a reproducible book that contains all the lessons, with reproducible step-by-step activity illustrations, measureable objectives and assessment forms required for planning. The student materials include step-by-step picture training and activity illustrations; sequenced picture cues; photo task sequencing and concepts.

**Looking Good–Personal Care** (66.1523.02.01) focuses on 47 personal care activities for example: Toileting; Washing; Bathing; Hair Care; After Bathing; Shaving; Dental Care; Eye and Nose Care; Menstrual Care.

**Keeping House–At Home or at Work** (66.1523.05.01) focuses on 48 step-by-step housekeeping tasks and presents domestic or vocational tasks and non-readers can follow the illustrated steps to complete tasks.
Shopping Smart – Grocery and Supermarkets (66.152.03.01) features illustrated reproducible step-by-step sequences of grocery and department store shopping, plus related skills like planning for shopping, dressing right and unpacking purchases at home. The accompanying coloured routine cards can assist in teaching about shopping items and for creating an illustrated shopping list for non-readers.

Home Cooking–Stove and Microwave (66.1523.04.01) details 38 lessons including objectives, training suggestions and reproducible recipe pages. Contents include 37 healthy, easy to prepare conventional oven and microwave recipes. Non-readers and learners with memory difficulties can follow the pictorial sequences used in each recipe.

Select-A-Meal–Fast Food, Table Service Restaurant, Cafeteria (66.1523.01.01) covers dining at fast food or table service restaurants, school cafeterias or at home. It includes step-by-step dining instructions, emphasizes table manners and appropriate social skills related to dining out or at home.

Other publications in the Attainment Company series include:

- Aligning Life Skills to Academics Program (66.1524.01.01) provides 650 lesson plans and worksheets aligned directly to the curricula of: math, science/health, social studies and language arts.
- Building Life Skill Portfolios (66.1508.01.01) contains a structured curriculum designed for students with special needs across the schooling grades to work towards independence by learning functional life skills and academic skills. It also provides a format for assisting learners to build their own life skill portfolios, be passed on through each grade and then taken with them when they graduate from school. The portfolios are designed to include information that and in turn could be used to assist them to find jobs, use public transportation and have an independent post school life.

**Vocabulary Instruction**


**The Bridge of Vocabulary**, Montgomery J. Pearson. 2007. 61.101201

**Vocabulary Games for the Classroom**, Carleton, L. & Marzano, R. 61105401

Vocabulary is important for learning, reading comprehension and school success. Vocabulary develops throughout our lifetime – when you start a new job, take up a new activity or read a new book you will need to learn the meaning of some unfamiliar words. Vocabulary instruction, then, should not be restricted to the early years in school, as students in high school will be encountering new words in all subject areas, some of them technical but also many words that will add richness to their language.

The authors of **Bringing Words to Life** are passionate about words and the teaching of vocabulary. They have written a book which is strongly anchored on research, and provides teachers with a framework for vocabulary development in children from pre-school through to late secondary school. Instruction is based on three guiding principles:

- Frequent encounters with words.
- Richness of instruction
- Extension of word use beyond the classroom.

Teachers are guided through selecting words to teach, creating meaningful activities and engaging students in thinking about and using new words. The focus for vocabulary in secondary classrooms is on exploring the complex dimensions of a word’s meaning and the relationships that exist to other words. Vocabulary work with older students will also be connected to text so that the word meaning is taught but also an enriched understanding of the text is gained.

**The Bridge of Vocabulary** and **Vocabulary Games for the Classroom** both provide useful support materials for Bringing Words to Life. They provide rich and engaging activities and games that are easily incorporated into a topic in the classroom.
Caring For Myself. Gast, C & K, Jane. 2008. 66.1546.01
For learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder everyday activities like brushing teeth, washing hands or visiting the doctor can cause anxiety and stress because of the sensory, cognitive and communication impairment they experience. This book illustrated with colour photographs is a social skills story book designed to help learners to understand the importance of taking care of their bodies.

Multiplication & Division Bingo Level 1. 2007. 64.1562.01
This bingo game, suitable for learners ages 6-7+, can be played by up to 7 players (one person as caller). The game cards have multiplication and division equations, photographic examples of groups and sets of counters on a line to calculate.

Turnstile Revolving Maze Game. 2011. 85.0702.01
The goal of this single player logic game, recommended for ages 8 and up, is to move the coloured tokens through a maze to their respective corners. Challenge cards and instructions are included.

Girlz Rock Book Pack. Smith D. & Holly E. 2006. 63.3357.01
This pack of High Interest Low Vocabulary books is suitable for learners with a reading age of 7 to 10 years. The five titles are part of the humorous Girlz Rock series which relays the fun, ordeals, disasters and friendships that girls share in their daily lives.

Touch & Match. 82.0652.01
This game aims to help develop early language, number and tactile skills. The pieces have ten different textures on top and a corresponding texture in the base tray so children can match by touch.

Rex Jones Press To Explore Set 2. Zucker, J. 2009. 63.3381.02
This pack of High Interest Low Vocabulary readers from the Rex Jones series have an interest level of 9-14 years A Teacher’s Guide is also included. See also Set 1 63.3381.01.01

Sorting Board. 82.0650.01
This set of 16 wooden blocks comes in 4 different shapes and colours. The blocks have to be sorted into a peg board which is designed so that only one type of shape will fit into one of the four sets of pegs.

Pattern Blocks And Pattern Cards. 82.0649.01
This set of colourful shapes allows students to classify and sort shapes and can also be used for pattern, symmetry, matching and problem solving.

Apps for Learning Middle Years. Dickens, H & Churches, A. 2012. 48.0113.01
This book begins with the basics found in any quality apps toolkits for students. It also details creative storytelling apps like Puppet Pals HD and language skill Builders like Play2Learn and SpellBoard. Book Creator provides the opportunity to make individual digital books or a piece of art can be created with Drawing Pad.

Diamond Match. 82.0655.01
Diamond Match, suitable for learners three and over, can be used to encourage early numeracy, colour matching, fine motor and visual discrimination skills. Learners use a stylus attached to the baseboard to move the coloured magnetic circles into appropriate spaces on the pattern board.

Say & Glue Phonological Awareness Fun Sheets. Price, A & Jane B. 2006. 63.3378.01
This book contains reproducible phonological awareness worksheets with CD-ROM for printing. The worksheets are designed to work on several areas of phonological awareness. The book also includes a criterion test that can be used for pre and post testing.

Phonics They Use Words For Reading And Writing. Cunningham, P. 2013. 36.0306.01
This reference books contains activities and strategies for teaching reading and blends together the complex and varied strategic approaches needed to help students develop reading and spelling skills.

Grammar And Meaning. Humphrey, S. 2012. 40.0072.01
This reference book aims to assist educators to build their knowledge of the grammatical resources of the English language system and apply that knowledge to their teaching practice. It supports the Australian Curriculum: English.

Talisman 2 Series Books 1-10. Reis-Frankfort, T. 2011. 63.3376.02
The Talisman 2 Series reading pack, suitable for learners requiring High Interest Low Vocabulary phonic based materials, continues from the Talisman 1 Series (63.33763.01) with the introduction of alternative spelling for more vowel and consonant sounds.

Little Learners Love Literacy Stage 2. Lea, L & P. 2010. 63.3391.02
The Little Learners Love Literacy series incorporates a multi-sensory approach designed to support the explicit and sequential teaching of literacy skills. It teaches phonic awareness—the ability to hear sounds in words, segment and blend sounds, as well as syllabification. See also: 63.3391.04.01 Blue—Stage 4; 63.3391.03.01 Green—Stage 3.

Reading And Spelling Made Simple. Andrew, M 2010. 63.3380.01
This pack contains four books an index of sounds and a Teaching Guide. The books are designed to be used in literacy development in writing and spelling and can be used for learners with learning difficulties. The Teaching Guide provides information on the basic principles and how to teach all aspects of the program.

Learning Science Activity Tub Force & Motion. 65.0350.01
This pack contains a variety of experiments and projects for students to investigate force and motion. The tub includes 40 cards with standards based activities covering 5 different curriculum areas - maths, arts, language, science and social studies.
Addition And Subtraction Facts Made Easy Grades 1-3. Lorio, N. 2012. 64.1561.01
This book and accompanying CD, contains mini-lessons for the interactive whiteboard which are designed to teach basic addition and subtraction concepts years 1-3.

Snap It Up! Word Families. 63.3385.01
This card game, suitable for two or more players aged six and over, is designed to build reading and phonic skills.

Basic Bingo A Game For Early Readers. 63.3388.01
A Game For Early Readers, suitable for one to nine players, covers the most basic high-frequency words. It can be played as a bingo game or used for one to one matching and comes with 4 baseboards with matching word cards.

Jungle Sound Puzzle. 83.1747.01
This bright, colourful wooden jungle animal puzzle has six different animal inset shapes. When the individual pieces are lifted out the corresponding animal sound can be heard. It can be used to encourage manual dexterity, vocabulary, visual discrimination, listening and matching.

Liquid Timer Set. 66.1460.02
The interior workings of both liquid timers can be viewed through the clear plastic. When the timers are inverted, the coloured oil droplets drip through a central hole into the compartment at the base. This process takes a minute to complete.

Giant Tracing Letters Lowercase. 67.0580.01
This box contains 26 alphabet jumbo write and wipe letters. Each letter has dotted lines and numbered arrows which point out the correct direction to write. The wooden letters can be wiped clean.

Literacy For Work Reading 1. Garner, J & C, Joy. 2011. 63.3386.01
The Literacy for Work series is a collection of books with work sheets that reinforce essential reading skills. They are suitable as High Interest Low Vocabulary material, for students in year 7-10 and also support less able students.

Diamond Counting. 64.1565.01
This game is designed to be used to teach early numeracy skills - counting, sorting, patterning and fine motor skills, and can be used in an upright position or on the table.

The Boy Inside Dvd. 19.0142.01
This 48 minute Canadian made DVD follows a 12 year old boy, Adam, with Asperger Syndrome as he tries to control his outbursts and make sense of bullies, girls and life in the real world.

Who Has What? All about Girls Bodies and Boys Bodies. Harris, R. 2011. 66.1557.01
This book relays the story of siblings Nellie and Gus and a day at the beach. During the day, they ask questions and figure out the similarities and differences between boys and girls in a humorous and honest way.

A 5 Could Make Me Lose Control. Dunn Buron, K. 2007. 66.1534.01
This hands on activity pack is designed to assist students who are highly anxious to cope with their stress by systematising social and emotional wellbeing. The learner finds the relevant cards describing highly stressful situations and then sorts them into colourful pockets on a chart. By designating stress levels, ranging from 1 - 5, this provides the first step for the learner to change the way they think about and respond to emotions such as anxiety, sadness and anger.

This book provides educators with research based information related to providing appropriate programs for learners with additional learning needs in their classrooms. It outlines the philosophy of inclusive practice and explains key processes including: adapting curriculum to meet individual needs, planning teaching strategies, encouraging positive interactions, smooth transitions and collaborative practices.

An Exceptional Children's Guide to Touch. Manasco, H. 2012. 66.1556.01
This picture book designed for learners with special needs, explains in simple terms how to tell the difference between acceptable and inappropriate touch. Each story covers a different type of touch from accidental to friendly to hurtful and will help learners to understand how boundaries change depending on the context.

This edition offers ready to use stories and new strategies for creating custom stories. These strategically written stories explain social situations in a way learners with autism understand, while teaching the social skills children need to be successful at home, at school and in the community.

Emotions & Emotions Bingo. 66.1558.041
This game includes picture cards of young people exhibiting a range of emotions which can be matched to the ones depicted on the game cards. These can also be matched with the word cards that describe a range of emotions including; angry, loved, surprised, shy, afraid and hurt. It supports the development of cooperation and turn taking skills as well as discussions about emotions and facial expressions.

Success and Dyslexia. Firth, N & Frydenberg, E. 2011. 18.0.234.01
This evidenced based program is designed to assist upper primary students with dyslexia to increase their ability to take control and cope with the problems that occur in their lives. As dyslexia is often highly resistant to improvement despite dedicated literacy and numeracy teaching interventions, this resource focuses instead on adaptive coping skills as a powerful determinant of life successes. The accompanying CD contains interviews, role plays, resources and web links, as well as handouts for classroom use.
UPCOMING EVENTS

SAVE THE DATE FOR ……..

Descriptors and registration forms can be found at http://web.seru.sa.edu.au/Workshops.htm

---

2013 Special Education Expo

The 10th Special Education Expo was held from 8 - 10 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 the Education Development Centre (EDC).

On Monday 8 July, the Expo was opened by Gino DeGennaro (Deputy Chief Executive Officer) at the Adelaide West Special Education Centre. Jane Farrell (consultant to schools across Australia and overseas) presented an all day workshop “Literacy for all: Blocks for Literacy Success”. Workshops were also held at SERU on iPad technology and Inclusive Learning Resources.

On Tuesday and Wednesday a range of workshops were held at the 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. A survey was sent to participants after the Expo, and the following suggestions were made:

- Participants would prefer to pay more to cover the cost of a catered lunch
- A larger percentage preferred that the Expo be held at the EDC (large range of workshops in one place) rather than in schools and at SERU. 66 of the 92 surveyed preferred the EDC, 7 SERU and 4 schools.
- The new registration database was very successful.
- Out of 92 surveys received, 42 preferred to book into individual sessions, 31 preferred full days, and 7 preferred half day bookings.

The Expo Committee would like to thank the staff who volunteered to assist at the expo during their school holidays. Discussions are currently underway about the 2014 Special Education Expo.