Welcome. This term's SERUpdate features a selection of articles from workshops and presentations at the 2006 Special Education Expo. Ingrid Alderton, Manager, Learning Difficulties Policy and Service organised the Special Education Expo. Ingrid also organised the articles for this edition of SERUpdate. Thank you Ingrid and the authors of each article. Look out for next year’s Special Education Expo, three days of workshops and presentations, from Monday 9th July to Wednesday 11th July 2007.

Ruth Motley—Manager

The Special Education Expo

The Third Annual Special Education Expo has just been successfully held in the first three days of the July 2006 school holidays. Once again there has been wonderful support from teachers and SSOs in registering and attending workshops held both at Special Education Resource Unit (SERU) and at North Adelaide Primary School.

The Special Education Expos have now become a regular feature in the calendar of many educators. Planning is already taking place for July 2007.

The Expo provides a range of opportunities for teachers, district support personnel and SSOs to increase their awareness and knowledge about the effective teaching and learning strategies and resources that support learners who have disabilities and learning difficulties.

Presenters of workshops represent specific areas of expertise and good practice from all education sectors and support services in South Australia.

The Special Education Expo arose from an idea that Helen Kowalenko, Disability Coordinator, East District shared with Patricia Winter, Assistant Director, Disability and Statewide Programs.

Helen describes the development of her concept in the following way:

As a teacher and Disability Coordinator I was becoming increasingly aware that training and development in the area of special education was very piecemeal and that there were a number of factors including the increasing cost of workshops that were preventing educators from attending. Very little opportunity existed for whole staff teams to attend workshops of relevance to particular students and sites and it was becoming more difficult to attend during school time as staff required backfilling whilst attending.
There was also a wealth of expertise and knowledge that existed in the community and from educators that didn’t have a forum for presenting and sharing with others.

The concept of the Expo was to provide an opportunity that was not only affordable, but tailored to the current climate and needs of sites and staff. The workshops were designed to be of a practical nature that could then be transferred into the educational setting. By providing a number of workshops over a three-day period in a holiday break it meant that staff could attend as individuals as well as teams thus making the most of the opportunities.

Such a forum provided an opportunity for local DECS specialists, agencies and practitioners to share their work in a more meaningful way. Nothing is more powerful than an educator presenting to other educators on programs and strategies that have worked for them.

The Expo has now seen its third year and the increasing numbers of participations and feedback given have indicated its success in a number of ways including, most importantly changed practice and outcomes for children with disabilities and special needs.

Two Special Education Expos have been held in country locations, one in Port Lincoln in 2005 and the other on the Limestone Coast at Naracoorte and Mount Gambier in 2006. The support of Deb Hemmings and Sarah Williams and their staff has been greatly appreciated by participants attending the workshops and by members of the Special Education Expo Planning Committee.

In 2006 the concept of holding the Special Education Expo on 2 sites, one being SERU with its Information and Communication Technology (ICT) focus and North Adelaide with its workshops and displays has led the planning group to discuss a range of exciting new options for 2007.

As a result of feedback from people who attended the Expo this year there will be a move to hold the 2007 Expo at the Education Development Centre at Hindmarsh. The whole Centre has been booked with the view to presenting similar strands as those in the past and to include opportunities for School Services Officers and parents to attend workshops to suit their needs.

The ICT strand at SERU was overwhelmingly subscribed this year and it is planned to continue with concurrent workshops at SERU next year.

Sincere thanks go to Peter Rawlins, Principal, North Adelaide Primary School, Rae Pennington, Administration Officer and all the staff at the North Adelaide Primary School for their generosity in providing the school premises for the three Special Education Expos and the consideration of teachers in allowing us to use their classrooms. It is with regret that the Expo will no longer be held at the school with its delightful surroundings and wonderful student work.

Thanks to all the people who have supported and attended the Special Education Expos. The 2007 Special Education Expo will be even bigger with more strands for parents and School Services Officers.

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A range of topics were presented at the 2006 Special Education Expo covering areas such as wellbeing, learning difficulties, various condition/disorders and aspects of curriculum. One such workshop that was presented was about mathematics and the skills that students require to be successful mathematicians.

Mathematics is often perceived to be about a range of skills involving strands such as number; measurement, space and chance and data. Teaching and learning mathematics involves developing mathematical knowledge and applying it in a range of ways and in different contexts.

Learning and understanding new mathematical knowledge and concepts is dependent on building on prior knowledge which has been developed over time through a range of experiences. Success in mathematics supports a student to develop a positive concept about him/herself as a mathematician. Such positive perceptions encourage and support students to continue to participate and engage with mathematics at school and in situations in the community. It is important that children and students are provided with activities that promote a positive perception of mathematics. Teaching should involve a range of methodologies and strategies such as explicit teaching and presenting open ended problem solving situations which encourage students to explore and discover.

The ability to correctly identify and discriminate numerals and symbols assists in the learning of number and the ability to be numerate. Observation of a student’s written work and conversations with the student assist in identifying any confusion the student may have about the visual similarity of some numbers or symbols.

Directionality and sequencing difficulties can lead some students to have difficulties in setting out and recording their work accurately. Cues such as coloured spots or a mark to highlight where to begin, arrows to show the direction, graph paper to assist in correctly recording/setting out a problem support students to be more effective and successful mathematicians.

Using concrete materials, charts, cue cards, self talk and visualising strategies will all assist students if they have difficulties with memory. Multisensory teaching is most effective in supporting a student move through the stages of being awkward when first learning a new skill to being proficient in that skill and to being able to generalize and use skills in a problem solving way.

The following resources are useful in planning and programming mathematic/numeracy activities:-

- Chinn, S (1996) What to do when you can’t learn the times tables Great Britain: Markco
- Golick, M (1986) Deal Me In USA: Jeffrey Norton
- Grinham, J (2000) Targeting Maths NSW: Blake Education

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Inclusive Practices in Supporting Learners with Disabilities from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds—specifically learners with refugee and migrant experience.

In 2005 a range of issues had emerged in various sites that highlighted the need for further understanding of the implications in supporting of learners with disabilities from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

A team consisting of a Disability Coordinator, Guidance Officer and NAP Coordinator collaborated on a project to further develop our understanding of the needs of learners with disabilities from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. To meet this need a project was designed by personnel in the Inner South and South West districts. The purpose of the project was to identify inclusive practices in supporting learners with disabilities from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, specifically learners with refugee and migrant experience. The leadership in both districts and the principal of Torrensville Primary School supported this cross-district initiative.

The Western District is characterised by significant number of families with refugee and migrant experience. For example it is projected that by 2006, 800 families (with up to eight children in each family) will have resettled in this district. Therefore it became increasingly clear that a resource was needed to support service providers to be aware of cultural sensitivities and issues relating to learners with disabilities and their families. For service providers to be inclusive of learners with disabilities from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds further information was required.

The project consisted of inquiry questions to act as a springboard to assist support personnel and sites to examine their own beliefs and the possible implications for their practice. Other key components of the project included the journey taken by the project team as they gathered information, reflected on their own practices, consulted with colleagues including the Manager English as a Second Language Programs and team and other organisations outside the education department including Migrant Health.

The outcome included the development of a resource package containing a case study, reflective questions, information from the literature and the field, and links to relevant services and organisations.

The purpose of the project was to support inclusive practices being utilized by service providers and site staff to improve learning outcomes for this client group. For example, a list of questions to consider when working with sites and families in supporting learners with disabilities from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, specifically learners with refugee and migrant experience follows.

- Does the concept of disability exist within the family’s culture or cultural beliefs?
- Does a word for disability exist?
- Does a generic term exist to describe disabilities instead of individual labels, for example Autism, Downs?
- If a word does not exist, how is the individual described or labelled by the family and/or the community? For example behaviour described as crazy or funny
- How does the family and cultural support, accept etc an individual with disability?
- What support and acceptance is available for the family within their community?
- What awareness and understanding do the family have of services and support available within and outside of DECS?
LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES

PROJECT: BEYOND THE SONG AND DANCE

- Do families know how to access services?
- Is there understanding that individuals with disabilities can develop independent skills to function in the community?

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SUPPORTING CHILDREN’S COMMUNICATION, BEHAVIOURAL AND EMOTIONAL NEEDS

The Circles of Comfort provides a framework which can help staff and families consider a range of factors that may be impacting on a child in any given environment. Strategies can then be specifically targeted to the child’s need.

Many children in early learning settings may present outwardly with similar behavioural, communication, social and learning struggles, but the underlying cause of these struggles may be very different. For example, consider the case of a child presenting with limited coping skills, severe communication impairments, externalising behaviours and severe social skills deficits. In one instance it could be that the child’s communication impairment has resulted in significant frustration and limited success with interacting appropriately with others in their environment. Alternatively, a child with the same outward presentation may instead have experienced significant trauma in their lives resulting in a high state of anxiety that has limited their opportunities to explore their environment and develop age appropriate skills.

Circles of Comfort

![Circles of Comfort diagram]
The *Circles of Comfort* is a framework based on the understanding that in different situations, children will feel varying levels of comfort. Within this model there are three zones. The ‘Blue Zone’ represents when children feel safe, confident and able to manage the expectations of the situation/activity. The ‘Yellow Zone’ is when children are challenged to practice or learn new skills without feeling overwhelmed. The ‘Red Zone’ is when children are over extended to a point where they can no longer adequately cope. It is important to note that over time and within any one day, children can and will move between all of these zones.

The *Circles of Comfort* allow us to map out the factors that impact on whether a child is working within their Blue, Yellow or Red Zone. This model considers the following factors.

**Environmental factors** (specific elements of the situation). For example: the social environment, how many and/or how familiar are the peers or adults present; the sensory environment, light, noise, congestion; and the learning environment, routines and expectations.

**Internal factors** (how the child experiences the situation/environment). For example: the child’s sensory integration skills, the ability to process movement, tactile information (touch), noise and visual information; the child’s physical state, including tiredness, illness, hunger; coping skills; the child’s ability to regulate emotions and behaviours; the child’s patterns of thinking such as their expectations about the situation, confidence, willingness to take risks and self-esteem; and the child’s emotional state, whether they are excited, calm, anxious or angry.

**Activities** (the nature of the task and the child’s ability to do the task). For example: the child’s motivation, is the activity preferred, disliked, active or quiet? familiarity, are the activities familiar or new activities? and the level of skill required to complete the task, is the child able to execute the necessary fine/gross motor skills, plan and action a sequence of events and/or use appropriate language?

**Behaviours to look for** (observed behaviours that give clues about the child’s comfort in different situations). For example: the use of language increases with comfort; note the body language, is the child smiling, giving eye contact, laughing? note their posture; and engagement, is the child running away, seeking interaction, in withdrawal or participating?

**Targeting Support and Interventions using the Circles of Comfort**

In considering all of these factors, it becomes clear that it is not just the situation in isolation, but the individual’s personality, skills, knowledge, emotional state, life experience and confidence in their ability to cope with the situation that will impact on whether a child is operating within their Blue, Yellow or Red Zone. Once these factors are identified for the child, support can be targeted more effectively.

While working within the Blue Zone is the most pleasant state of being, it is essential that children are supported to spend time being encouraged to operate within their Yellow Zone so they can practice and learn new skills. Similarly, while keeping stress and discomfort to a minimum, spending some time within the Red Zone can be an important learning experience for children if they are supported to learn new skills from this experience (for example coping skills).

The important thing is that educators and families consider all of the factors that impact on children’s level of comfort and target support and intervention towards creating a balance for children between comfort, new learning and stress. This balancing needs to happen in two ways. Firstly, by extending children from their Blue Zone to Yellow Zone to practice new skills and secondly, by supporting children to calm from their Red Zone back to their Blue Zone.
Supporting Children to Extend their Skills: Moving from Blue to Yellow Zone

Children who are not risk takers or lack skills and confidence may mostly choose activities and situations that fall within their Blue Zone of comfort. It is important that educators and families support these children to extend their skills by introducing new activities, peers or expectations (Yellow Zone) while also monitoring that they are not presenting behavioural signs of moving into their Red Zone. Building safe relationships using teaching strategies such as making activities fun, using play based learning, modelling, explicit teaching, visual aides, scaffolding, facilitation and then withdrawal are all vital in supporting children to comfortably move from their Blue Zone to their Yellow Zone and practice and learn new skills.

Supporting Children to Calm Down: Moving from Red to Blue Zone

Children who struggle to cope, have had limited opportunities to access learning or have had life experiences that have impacted on their self-esteem, feelings of safety and security and ability to regulate their emotions may spend significant amounts of time in their Red Zone. Educators will need to focus on building safe relationships with children, identifying and responding early to warning signs that children are becoming overwhelmed and supporting children to learn appropriate coping skills in order to best support them to move from their Red Zone back to their Blue Zone. When a child is feeling overwhelmed (Red Zone), it is important that they are supported to feel comfortable again (Blue Zone) before again attempting to extend their skills (Yellow Zone). Strategies to achieve the shift from Red Zone to Blue Zone include creating a calm, safe learning environment (withdrawal place, calming sensory activities available, reduce congestion and so on); using consistent approaches, modelling calming and coping strategies (for example, using minimal language when in Red Zone, deep breathing, asking for help, using a calm tone or voice, choosing a quiet place); and labelling emotions (how do they look, feel inside my body and so on).

In summary, it is important to remember the following when supporting children’s communication, behavioural and emotional needs:

- While children may present with similar struggles, the underlying causes of these struggles may be very different and so individualised strategies will need to be developed.
- When considering children’s needs use the framework, the **Circles of Comfort**, to explore range of factors.
- Once the factors impacting on children’s level of comfort have been identified, staff teams and families will need to use this information to develop strategies for supporting children to move between their Blue and Yellow, and alternatively, between their Red and Blue Zones.

For support with developing strategies and interventions for children within your site, please contact your District Support Services staff.

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What is it?
Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) is defined by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association as the auditory system mechanisms and processes responsible for particular auditory (hearing-related) behaviors. APD can more simply be defined as...what we do with what we hear (Katz, 1992), or what happens when the brain can’t hear. Auditory Processing is how well we collect sounds, detect, transform, attend, discriminate and decode, associate, integrate and organize what we hear, and decide what to say. Learners with APD are able to hear all that is said – hearing is a physical event. However processing what is heard becomes a nightmare. What the learners hear and what they end up having to interpret is distorted. It is said to be like hearing under water.

Common Characteristics
Learners with APD may:
- behave as if a hearing loss is present even though hearing sensitivity is normal; they will have difficulty following instructions, be inattentive, distractible due to background noise
- refuse to participate in classroom discussions or may respond inappropriately at the wrong time, answer questions or make comments out of kilter, being slightly off the mark
- give a slow or delayed response when called upon
- misunderstand in class, misinterpret or mishear
- be withdrawn or sullen, quiet or shy, dreamers or disruptive
- ask for frequent repetitions, say what or huh a lot, or say, I didn't hear you
- have poor memory for auditory information or difficulty following multi-step directions
- seek a high degree of teacher time, but work very well in a 1:1 situation
- have lower verbal IQ scores than performance scores on a psychologist’s assessment
- demonstrate significant scatter across subtests assessed by speech/language and/or psycho educational tests, with weaknesses in auditory dependent areas
- exhibit poor reading, writing and/or spelling skills
- have fine and/or gross motor skill deficits
- exhibit poor singing and music skills
- have a family history for APD and/or ADHD and/or learning disabilities
- quite often be misdiagnosed as ADHD, therefore an early differential diagnosis is vital
- have had a history of chronic otitis media with associated conductive hearing loss, that is middle ear problems associated with consistent heavy colds
- have poor general academic performance despite normal hearing sensitivity, normal non-verbal intelligence and normal visual processing skill
- act out in the classroom
- have fear of failure and diminished self esteem.

What can the teacher expect?
The teacher can expect the learner will have difficulties in auditory memory, auditory discrimination, blending, reading, spelling and listening in noisy environments. The learner will also have difficulties with lack of concentration, fatigue and frustration. The level at which a learner with APD has to concentrate is far greater than that of his peers.
It is not uncommon for learners with APD who may be behaving well at school to change their behaviours at home. If they have been in a noisy environment all day and go home to more noise they may very well explode. It is worthwhile chatting with the parents to share information. There may be issues with completion of homework and assignments/projects.

There will be times when the teacher will become frustrated, when it is difficult to understand why the learner responds well in a 1:1 situation but not in a group or class. The teacher may wonder, just how many times they have to repeat instructions or go to the learner’s desk and check how far he/she is into the assignment.

The teacher can expect APD to impact seriously on literacy development – it limits access to real language and successful participation in communicative exchanges. Little pieces of language may not be perceived. For example, when asked Have you had an ice cream?, the learner with APD may perceive the question as a statement/accusation, You have had an ice cream! and not a question. A lively discussion could ensue.

**What happens in the classroom?**

In the classroom, when the teacher speaks a sentence, the spoken message goes out into the room, bounces off all hard surfaces and by the time it gets to the learner’s ear, it is muddled, distorted and incomplete. A teacher usually speaks on average, at 162 words a minute, so as each sentence is expressed it becomes distorted to the learner with APD. There is every chance the learner is picking up on bits and pieces of information and trying to piece them together. It is not surprising then, that the learner may look puzzled, appear to be confused, ask constantly for information to be repeated, switches off except in 1:1 sessions, and exhibits some behaviours in class and in the playground that are not acceptable. Learners with APD will often speak at the wrong time just as the teacher has settled the class. This is because it is nice and quiet and they can hear and understand themselves.

**How to Support Learners with APD**

1. **Optimise the acoustic environment**

   It is important to create a good listening environment because it is ESSENTIAL to reduce background noise and reverberation. REMEMBER that even if the teacher is delivering information in a quiet room, with no – one else talking there is still a problem – the bouncing around of the teacher’s words!!!

   To optimise the acoustic environment:
   - Hang 3-D examples of work or have staggered lines of work hanging overhead, the more the better for the listening environment. Noise gets trapped and there is less reverberation.
   - Remember to stand closer to the learner with APD. If the teacher generally stands three or four metres away, then simply halving that distance doubles the volume.
   - Think about closing doors / windows, turning off the air conditioner, fans and soon when the class needs to listen to new material and instructions.
   - Use foam, rubber or old football socks wrapped around legs of tables and chairs.
   - Encourage turn-taking in discussions.
   - Write key words on the board when speaking; write the outcomes on the board before the start of a lesson; write questions requiring an answer on the board before beginning the lesson.
   - When questioning for understanding ask, What are you going to do now? or Tell me what you have to do. NEVER ask, Did you understand? because the learner will respond with a head nod which often means nothing.
**AUDITORY PROCESSING DISORDER (APD)**

- Always use a clear voice, good pronunciation, intonation and expression and get a little animated even excited about the work being presented. Use a confident voice as indeed, all learners in the room can be encouraged to do. Learners soon get used to using a confident voice if encouraged to do so
- Be loud enough to be understood – louder than the background noise
- Gain the students attention before speaking
- Check understanding
- Encourage turn-taking in conversations/discussions
- Provide short-term intervention to facilitate the development of good listening and auditory discrimination skills, such as a program of training in auditory discrimination of speech sounds contrasts, and general listening strategies. Learners with APD seem to have missed some critical experiences.

These suggestions are inclusive teaching practices, so teachers will not be doing something special or extra just for the learner with APD. Each strategy will help to keep all students on air and help them to become better listeners and appreciative of a good listening environment.

3. What can learners do?
Encourage and support learners to:
- Use self help skills
- Ask for clarification
- Request simplification of language structure
- Use a buddy or note takers
- Use an FM
- Watch the speaker
- Be aware that errors in listening co-exist with learning
- Recognise their own difficulties and understand what they can do for themselves
- Ask teacher to take their hand away from mouth
- Ask for noise level to be more controlled
- Ask people to be quiet.

4. Learner’s self esteem
Difficulties with self concept will occur because the learner cannot help but be influenced by continual academic failure and upsetting social situations. This is an area that if addressed will produce the most remarkable change. Identify the problems, explore strategies, encourage and remind the learner what he/she can do. By identifying his/her own needs, being able to articulate his/her feelings, knowing I can do something about this, having self-monitoring and self-problem solving skills, there will be a marked change.

5. At home
Since homes are also noisy places, parents can apply the same basic rules as for the classroom. These rules are:
- Obtain visual attention
- Get rid of background noise and other distractions
- Seat the learner closer to the speaker.

Studying with the television or radio playing in the background is not recommended for learners with APD. If the learner is not paying attention or asking for information to be repeated, parents/carers must obtain visual attention before speaking. It is important not to try to carry on a conversation across large rooms, while the TV is playing, or if the learner is in another room. This will only frustrate both parent/carer and learner. To carry on a conversation, be in the same room with the same purpose - to talk with each other.
AUDITORY PROCESSING DISORDER (APD)

References:

Sloan, Christine. PhD: *Auditory Processing Difficulties*.

Stafford, Judith. Coordinator Hearing Impairment South West District, DECS

Useful web sites
Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, 2006, Austin, enter *central auditory processing disorders* as the search topic, viewed June 2006 <http://www.tsbvi.edu>


http://www.ldonline.org
Resources for parents and teachers


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AUDITORY PROCESSING SCREENING

The human auditory system can be divided into 2 main parts:
1. The peripheral auditory system (ear) which detects and changes sound into a signal that the brain can use and
2. The central auditory system (brain) that interprets the information sent by the ear.

The first part refers to the mechanics of hearing and the second is the brainwork of hearing. Thus, Auditory Processing is defined as …*the ability to hold, sequence and process or understand what is heard.*

The ability to hold and process language is a maturational process that develops with time. These skills do not necessarily develop at the same rate as general intelligence or expressive language.

Research shows that if a mismatch in development rate occurs, and the child’s auditory processing skills (or language intake processing) are delayed in their development, then a barrier to language and communication can exist. (Rowe, Rowe, Pollard, 2004)

Auditory processing development that is delayed affects a child’s ability to learn, their behaviour and their sense of self worth.

Learning skills that may be compromised include:
- Following directions, instructions and explanations
- Reading, spelling, comprehension and expressive language
- Concentrating and attending.
Behaviours exhibited may include:
- Day dreaming
- Being distracted and/or restlessness
- Being vague
- Not complying with classroom rules
- Being talkative
- Being shy/withdrawn
- Not participating
- Being frustrated.

Well-being of the child may be affected in many ways. The child may:
- Lose confidence in their ability to listen and do things
- Experience confusion
- Misunderstand
- Display poor self-esteem
- Identify themselves as *dumb* or *stupid*.

Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) is a learning disorder that is identified by an audiologist, following rigorous testing. It can only be identified after the age of 7, and must preclude any hearing loss.

Students with Auditory Processing difficulties (APd) may display similar behaviours to those identified with an APD.

Research by Rowe, Rowe and Pollard (2004) indicates that 20% of children starting school have delayed Auditory Processing Skills. Their research proved that simple adaptation of teaching strategies can markedly improve overall student learning and behaviour, even when auditory processing skills are underdeveloped. These teaching strategies include:
- Focusing the learner to listen
- Using short, grammatically correct sentences
- Pausing often between sentences and phrases
- Establishing predictable classroom routines
- Looking at the learner when giving instructions
- *Chunking* information e.g. c-at = cat, rather than c-a-t
- Reducing background noise
- Using a variety of modalities – visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile.

*The Auditory Processing Assessment Kit* published by The Royal (Victorian) Children’s Hospital is an auditory processing screening tool, designed for use with children in their first year of school. The screening tool has 3 parts. First the child must pass a simple hearing acuity screen. Next the child is asked to repeat a series of progressively complex sentences. Lastly they are asked to repeat a series of digits. Children in their first year of schooling who score 3 digits and 8 words or higher are considered to have adequate auditory processing skills. Children scoring less than 3 digits and 8 word sentences have been shown to be at high risk of inattentive behaviours and poor progress in literacy unless extra care is taken to implement appropriate teaching strategies (Rowe, Rowe and Pollard, 2004).

The kit, and a newer version which can be used with students up to 15 year of age, is available from:

The Educational Resource Centre
The Royal Children’s Hospital
Melbourne
by ordering on line at <www.auditoryprocessingkit.com.au>

Contact: Ailsa Howard, Co-ordinator, Hearing Impairment
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DIRECTING CHILDREN'S THINKING THROUGH QUESTIONS

This workshop, presented at the South Australian Special Education Expo, examined several models developed to describe the process of teaching thinking skills. It looked at resources available for classroom teachers who use questions to facilitate the development of thinking skills.

A good teacher makes you think even when you don’t want to (Fisher, 1998).

When developing thinking skills, the focus is on the knowing how and learning how to learn. If learning is making sense of experience, and thinking is how we learn, then improving children’s thinking will help them to make more sense of learning and of life (Buxton, 2003).

Questions can be used to help make sense of the world. They are the most powerful tools we have to assist with making decisions and solving problems, for inventing, changing and improving our lives as well as the lives of others. Questioning is central to learning and growing (Fisher, 1999).

Models of Thinking

Perceptual Language Distance ‘Model Levels of Questions’ - Blank, Rose and Berlin (1978)

Blank, Rose and Berlin asked, What language facilitates learning to think? In response to this question, they developed a model based on the language used in preschool and junior primary classrooms which describes the development of questioning skills from ages three to six years.

The model encompasses instructions that require a response and goes beyond categorising questions by the first word (who/what/when/why/how).

There are four levels of questions. Level one is the most basic, and incorporates questions that rely on knowledge of the here and now. Level four contains the most complex, abstract questions that require children to draw on their knowledge of the world. Examples include:

Level One
Show me the…
What is this?

Level Two
What is happening?
How are these different?

Level Three
What will happen next?
Which one is not…?

Level Four
What will happen if…?
What made it happen?

Bloom's Taxonomy – Benjamin Bloom (1950’s)

Bloom’s Taxonomy is a classification of thinking organised by level of complexity. It gives teachers and students an opportunity to learn and practice a range of thinking and provides a simple structure for many different kinds of questions.

The taxonomy was first developed by Benjamin Bloom in the 1950s. During the 1990s Lorin Anderson (a former student of Bloom) revisited the taxonomy and a number of changes were made. Bloom’s Taxonomy continues to be one of the most universally applied models. It organises thinking skills into six levels, from the most basic of thinking skills (remembering) to the higher order levels of thinking (creative thinking). Examples include:
EDUCATION EXPONEE Special Education Expo

DIREC TING CHILDREN’S THINKING THROUGH QUESTIONS

Blooms Revised Taxonomy

**Remembering**
What happened after…?
Can you name…?
What is…?

**Understanding**
Can you explain why…?
What do you think could have happened next…?
Does everyone act in the way that…did?

**Applying**
Do you know another instance where…?
Which factors would change if…?
Can you group by characteristics such as…?

**Analysing**
What was the problem with…?
If…happened, what might the ending have been?
Why did…changes occur?

**Evaluating**
Is there a better solution to…?
How would you feel if…?
What are the consequences…?

**Creating**
What would happen if…?
How many ways can you…?
Can you develop a proposal which would…?

Source: Learning to Think, Thinking to Learn, Pohl, p.14

**De Bono’s Six Thinking Hats – Edward De Bono (1985)**
My one ambition is that around the world there should be a few more young people who come to say, ‘I am a thinker’. I would be even more pleased if some of them were to go further and say: ‘I am a thinker – and I enjoy thinking.’ Edward de Bono.

Edward De Bono strongly believes that thinking is a skill that can and should be taught. His book, *Six Thinking Hats* (1985) provides a system that can be used to teach and develop parallel and lateral thinking skills aimed at encouraging creative, lateral and parallel thinking skills; improve the thinking process; improve communication; speed up decision making and avoid debate. Examples are:

**White Hat**
What information do we have?
What information do we need to get?

**Red Hat**
How do I feel about this?

**Black Hat**
Will it work?
What could be wrong with this?

**Yellow Hat**
Why is it a good thing to do?
What are the good points?

**Green Hat**
Are there some different ideas?
What new ideas are possible?

**Blue Hat**
What thinking / planning is needed?

SaferSanerSchools - Restorative Practices, Restorative Questions

Restorative practices focus on restoring a healthy, respectful relationship between the aggrieved parties and the offender. The approach emphasises positive support within strong limits. Instead of being isolated further from the community, offenders are expected to face the people they have wronged, listen to the harm caused by their inappropriate behaviour and find an acceptable way to make amends. Lists of Restorative Questions are used to facilitate this restorative conversation (Watchel, 1999).

The questions can be used in schools and offer students an opportunity to talk, listen, think and act. The restorative practice framework is a process for forming effective relationships and a way of restoring them when they break down.
When things go wrong
- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

When someone has been hurt
- What did you think when you realised what had happened?
- What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Resources
The following are activity ideas and resources displayed and discussed during the workshop. Speech Pathologists working in your preschool or school can assist with your site locating these resources.

CD Resources
From What to Why: Developing children's thinking skills through questions (2006). The State of South Australia, Department of Education and Children's Services. This new resource book and CD provides general information about children's ability to understand and answer questions and the accompanying CD contains specific activity ideas and resources. For further information or to purchase contact Christina El Sayed at the Inner South District Office – 8416 7370.


The CD contains information on developing oral language skills and provides information on using questions to develop descriptive language skills. One example is SCUMPS
S – What size is it?
C – What colour is it?
U – What do you use it for?
M – What materials is it made from?
P - What parts does it have?
S – What shape is it?

For further information please email:
decs.noarlunga.reception@saugov.sa.gov.au

Literacy Activities
Your site Speech Pathologist should have access to the following resources.

Story Maps / Plans
A range of different plans are available to assist students with recounts and/or creative writing using questions such as, Where?, Who?, When?, What happened?, How did they feel?

Book Based Questions
Several Speech Pathologists in DECS (Sue Moulde, 1998; Sue McCandlish, 2000; Rachel Althorp, 200; Marcie Charlton, 2001) have created handouts that list suitable questions at various levels “Levels of Questions” for popular children’s picture books.

References

Blank, Rose and Berlin (1978). The Language of Learning: The Preschool Years


DIRECTING CHILDREN’S THINKING THROUGH QUESTIONS


Model Mapping – Logotron educational software

<http://www.logo.com/twp/vocab.html>


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SA NEW STUDENT REPORTS

What’s it all about? What does it mean for students with disabilities?

Background

The Australian Government has set new regulations for State and Territory education systems with which to comply when providing student achievement reports to all parents. It is now a requirement under the legislation *Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement through Choice and Opportunity) Regulations 2005*, that schools will use common reporting elements that have been developed by State and Territory jurisdictions and endorsed by the Federal Minister for Education.

The common reporting elements required in student achievement reports are:

- written in plain English
- used at least twice a year beginning 2006
- compulsory for all schools (public and private) across Australia
- for all learners in years 1-10
- based on a 5 point grade scale or equivalent
- that they indicate relative achievement of the child against the child’s peer group (school year level) through quartiles.

After an extensive consultation process with educators, the South Australian Government negotiated with the Federal Government to have schools incorporate the following requirements into existing local report formats for all learners in years 1-10.
Teachers should write their reports using language that is simple and easy to understand so parents have a clear picture of their child’s progress at school.

Twice a year
Beginning at the end of 2006 schools will report once in the first half of the year and at the end of the year using the common report elements.

Based on 5 achievement levels
For each learning area/subject/course teachers make professional judgment about student achievement against an A, B, C, D, or E level (mandated element).

The common A-E levels for reporting progress and achievement, to be used for all learners in years 1-10, in each learning area are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent achievement beyond what is expected at this year level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good achievement of what is expected at this year level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Satisfactory achievement of what is expected at this year level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Partial achievement of what is expected at this year level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Minimal achievement of what is expected at this year level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After discussions earlier this year with the Commonwealth Minister for Education, Science and Training, agreement was reached on a modified position in the primary years. Schools can use the following equivalent statements, rather than A – E grades for primary students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent achievement beyond what is expected at this Year level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good achievement of what is expected at this Year level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory achievement of what is expected at this Year level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partial achievement of what is expected at this Year level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal achievement of what is expected at this Year level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The A – E achievement levels are worked out using state-wide South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability Framework (SACSA) Standards, instead of standards set by individual schools. This means that an A level is consistent in all schools, that is, the student has achieved beyond what is expected of this year level using the SACSA Curriculum Standards as the mandated common reference point. These standards represent the expected performance of all learners at the end of a two-year period and are aligned with the years of schooling as follows:

Towards the end of Year 2 – Standard 1
Towards the end of Year 4 – Standard 2
Towards the end of Year 6 – Standard 3
Towards the end of Year 8 – Standard 4
Towards the end of Year 10 – Standard 5

The question a teacher needs to ask is, whether, based on current progress the child will achieve the expected Standard at the end of Years 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10. For subjects/ courses that involve a combination of different learning area outcomes for example, Agricultural Science teachers base their judgements on the outcomes that form the basis of the SACSA subject/course.
It is a requirement under the legislation that parents have access to information that compares their child’s achievement with other students’ achievement.

In South Australia, the Department of Education and Children’s Services (DECS) has successfully negotiated with the Commonwealth that parents can request the school to provide them with information that shows the number of other students in the same year level/subject/course at the school who achieved A, B, C, D and E in that Learning Area or subject.

These are not quartiles: they are actual numbers of students from each year level. Schools must include this statement at least once on the report if they don’t show the number of students achieving A – E in the child’s peer group:

You can ask the school to provide you with written information that clearly shows your child’s achievement in the subjects studied in comparison to that of other children in the child’s peer group at school. This information will show you the number of students in each of the achievement levels A-E.

Due to privacy principles, this comparison is not a requirement for sites with fewer than 10 students in a given year level/subject/course.

What about students with disabilities?

Schools and teachers make decisions about the SACSA Outcomes and Standards which are to be reported in each of the Learning Areas for each year level. The new student reports are the means by which teachers are required to report on student progress and achievement when compared to the student’s year level. For reporting on students with disabilities, teachers will need to consider two questions:

1. Will the student demonstrate progress towards those same SACSA Outcomes and Standards using accommodations as negotiated through the NEP process? (If yes, the student will receive an A-E achievement level)

   and/or

2. Will the SACSA Outcomes and Standards that the school will be reporting against, need to be modified? (If yes, the student’s progress and reporting will occur through the goals of the student’s NEP not using A-E achievement levels.)

Most students with disabilities will receive a new student report except where the nature and type of their disability is severe. The SACSA Outcomes and Standards which students with disabilities are expected to achieve in identified Learning Areas, are described in their Negotiated Education Plan (NEP). It is important to understand the nature and the severity of the student’s disability and then to know what accommodations will support the learner to achieve SACSA Outcomes and Standards commensurate with their peers.

Accommodations are adjustments that support the learner to achieve the same Outcomes as their peers. For example having a vision impairment or a physical/health condition does not mean that the student is not able to achieve the same Outcomes and Standards as their peers. When accommodations are used to support the student achieve SACSA Outcomes and Standards in these Learning Areas, an A-E achievement level is given.
Other accommodations and scaffolds that support the learner achieve the same outcomes as their peers can be extended time to be taught a skill, learn and complete tasks. Additional examples are included on the SACSA website Equity Cross Curriculum Perspectives, http://www.sacsa.sa.edu.au/ the NEP http://web.seru.sa.edu.au/, and the SSABSA Alternative Assessment for Students with Disabilities http://www.ssabsa.sa.edu.au/ is also a useful guide.

In situations where SACSA Outcomes and Standards have been modified through the NEP planning process, students with disabilities will not receive an A-E level. When the SACSA Outcomes and Standards have been modified to the extent that they are significantly different from those of their peers, and it is not anticipated that the student will achieve the expected Standard they should be working at or towards, the student would not receive an A-E level.

**What happens for students with Learning Difficulties?**

It is an Australian Government requirement that all students receive a New Student Report. DECS has negotiated with the Australian Government to exempt some students with disabilities and some ESL students from requirements of the New Student Report, therefore the New Student Report will need to be provided for students with learning difficulties.

In situations where the student is unlikely to achieve the SACSA Outcomes and Standards expected for their year level, written comments about the progress of students with learning difficulties will be the most important way to clarify the grade a student has been given.

**Can we use A-E achievement levels for students with disabilities who are working at Outcomes and Standards below those of their peers?**

No. The intent of the A-E achievement levels is to report on the progress of students when compared to their year level. A student with disabilities, who has different Outcomes or Standard to their peers, will have their progress reported through the NEP process. These different Outcomes and Standards and their individualised goals would have been negotiated and documented in the student’s Learning Plan.

**Contact:** Margaret Lynch, Manager Disability Curriculum Policy and Research Telephone: 8226 1772 Email: lynch.margaret@saugov.sa.gov.au

**DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1992 AND THE STANDARDS FOR EDUCATION 2005—IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE**

**History**

Internationally and nationally there has been an increase in the number of people with disabilities. The Australian Bureau of Statistics conducted the first disability survey in 1981. After adjusting for changes between surveys and in the age distribution of the population, the rate increased from 15% of the population in 1981 to 19% in 1998. In the 2003 Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, Aging and Carers, the rate increased again to 1 in 5 or 20% of the Australian population (p. 1). Reasons for this increase include: improved diagnostic tools, successful medical interventions, extended life span of people with disabilities and an increase in the awareness and social acceptance of disability.

The 1981 International Year for people with disabilities and increased activism from the disability community stimulated by the International year, focused attention in Australia on the need for increased recognition and protection of human rights for people with disabilities (Ozdowski, 2003).
Over the next ten years there were increasing calls for stronger protection of human rights for people with disabilities and in 1992 the Federal government passed the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). Although each of the states had anti-discrimination legislation covering grounds such as race, sex and disability discrimination, national legislation was considered to be necessary to achieve consistent and comprehensive coverage.

Overview of the Disability Discrimination Act (1992)
The purpose of the DDA is to achieve equality of opportunity and non-discriminatory treatment for people with a disability. It also addresses structural barriers preventing people with a disability from exercising the rights and freedoms enjoyed by people without a disability. At the time of its introduction, the Disability Discrimination Act was anticipated to be instrumental in achieving broad social change with far reaching effects for people with a disability (Beecher, no date, cited in Australian Journal of Human Rights, 2005, p. 141).

Section 3 of the DDA states that the objects of this Act are:

a) to eliminate as far as possible, discrimination against persons on the grounds of disability in the areas of:
   i) work, accommodation, education, access to premises, clubs and sport; and
   ii) the provision of goods, facilities, services and land; and
   iii) existing laws; and
b) the administration of Commonwealth laws and programs; and
c) to ensure, as far as practicable, that persons with disabilities have the same rights to equality before the law as the rest of the community; and
d) to promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle that persons with disabilities have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community(p.1).

The DDA has a very broad definition of disability that covers a wide range of disabilities, imputed (thought to have) disabilities and possible future disabilities. The DDA also covers carers or associates (for example, parents, grandparents, advocates and friends) of people with disabilities who may experience discrimination as a result of their caring role or association with a person with a disability. The DDA definition of disability includes reference to children and students with learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural disorders and challenging behaviours and medical conditions. The DECS’ Students with Disabilities Policy has been revised to reflect this broad definition.[1]

The legislation covers both direct and indirect discrimination. Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than a person without a disability would be treated in the same or similar circumstances. For example, it would be direct discrimination if a student with a disability were not allowed to participate in a sports day. Indirect discrimination occurs in situations where a requirement is the same for all people, but in some way unreasonably disadvantages a person with a disability because he or she has a disability. For example, if a teacher assessed the knowledge of a group of students by requiring them to write a report, even though one member of the group has a learning disability, which affected his/her ability to write effectively.

Under the DDA there is a legal requirement that educational institutions will at times need to make reasonable adjustments to ensure equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.
These can include administrative, physical or procedural modifications depending on the needs of the individual person. In an educational environment these could include providing differentiated curriculum, allowing a student to demonstrate their learning differently, facilitating additional technical assistance and providing additional learning support. When accommodating students’ needs and/or making modifications, each student should be assessed on an individual basis. Often the most effective and appropriate response to particular needs will be determined through collaboration between the student, their carers or associates, staff and personnel able to provide disability specific advice.

The DDA does provide a limit to making reasonable adjustments to provide access and participation for a person with a disability on the grounds that to do so would impose unjustifiable hardship on the service provider or facility operator. The defence of unjustifiable hardship takes into account all the relevant circumstances of the case. These include the nature of the benefit or the detriment likely to accrue or be suffered by the persons concerned, the effect of the disability on the person concerned and the financial circumstances and estimated expenditure required of the respondent (Beecher, no date, cited in Australian Journal of Human Rights, 2005, p. 147). When considering the question of undue hardship in the education sector, it would be difficult for public/large education authorities to use this defence given their sizeable financial resources.

Disability Standards
Section 31 of the DDA gives the Federal government the power to formulate standards, which are subordinate legislation. Disability standards are one of a number of strategies within the DDA to achieve its aims. The standards aim to clarify legal obligations under the DDA in a range of areas namely education, accommodation, access to premises, employment, the provision of public transport and facilities and the administration of Commonwealth laws and programs.

Disability standards in Australia are developed using a process of negotiation and consultation with relevant groups. To date, disability standards have been written for Accessible Public Transport (2002) and Education (2005). Draft Premises Standards have also been developed.

Complaints
The Disability Discrimination Act (1992) contains provisions that enable people with disabilities to lodge a complaint with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) if they believe that they have been excluded from access to services normally available to people without a disability. The Commission has the legal power to conduct enquiries and resolve matters of discrimination and human rights infringements under four different Commonwealth Acts – Age Discrimination Act (2004), Disability Discrimination Act (1992), Racial Discrimination Act (1975) and the Sex Discrimination Act (1984). Complaints made to HREOC are resolved through investigation and conciliation. If this is unsuccessful, the complainant can apply to the Federal Court to have the matter heard and determined.
The HREOC website [www.hreoc.gov.au](http://www.hreoc.gov.au) provides useful and interesting information for education personnel about how the *Disability Discrimination Act* has been interpreted and applied in education (and in other areas). Summaries of selected complaint outcomes indicate that a large majority of complaints are settled by conciliation. While settlement of complaints through conciliation are generally made without admission of liability, and therefore are not legal precedents, these summaries do show some of the results being achieved by the DDA in practice (Ozdowski, 2003, p. 5).

**Disability Standards For Education (2005)**

The *Disability Discrimination Act* deals in broad terms with what is required of educational providers for compliance with the Act. The primary purpose of the Disability Standards for Education (2005) (the Standards), is to clarify and make more explicit, the obligations of education and training service providers under the DDA, and the rights of people with disabilities in relation to education and training.

> *The key concept of the Standards is the principle of treating a student with a disability on the same basis as a student without a disability. Achieving this equality involves education providers making adjustments for students with a disability* (The Allen Consulting Group, 2003, p. 4).

The Standards cover the following areas:

- enrolment
- participation
- curriculum development, accreditation and delivery
- student support services
- elimination of harassment and victimisation.

Each area of the Standards includes a statement of the rights or entitlements of students with disabilities, a description of the legal obligations or responsibilities or educational providers and a description of the measures, if implemented, will be evidence of compliance with the legal obligation. *The measures are examples of compliant actions and are performance based.* However, the measures may not cover the needs of all students with disabilities, or all educational levels and contexts, and full compliance with the Standards may require additional or alternative actions (Disability Standards for Education, 2005, p. 5).

The Standards extend the scope of the DDA in three areas:

- inclusion in the definition of *education provider*, of organisations whose purpose *is the development and accreditation of curricula, training packages or courses* (Disability Standards for Education, 2005, p. 9)
- the prevention of harassment and victimisation
- extension of the defence of unjustifiable hardship beyond the point of enrolment.

The legislation provides for a review of Standards every five years. The Standards are accompanied by Guidance Notes and these provide additional explanatory material, including background information and comment, to assist in interpreting and complying with the Standards.

**Footnote:**

[1] Targeted funding continues to be for those students on the Statewide Disabilities Database – District Disability Supplementary Funding and additional funding in the site Resource Entitlement Statement.
Understanding The Legislation And Implications For Preschools And Schools

On the same basis: Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act Education Standards

In 2000, the South Australian Department of Education Training and Employment published the Fair and Reasonable Disability Discrimination Act Implementation Kit, to support schools in providing a more inclusive education for learners with disabilities. The Kit was based on the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. The Disability Standards for Education became a legal requirement for Australian education providers in August 2005.

Over recent months the South Australian Department of Education and Children’s Services (DECS) has been developing a resource to assist education staff implement the Disability Standards for Education. On the same basis: Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act Education Standards, builds on the Fair and Reasonable Kit. The Disability Standards for Education emphasise the need to consider people with disabilities on the same basis as all other people – hence the name of this new resource. It is expected to be distributed in print form in October this year and will also be available on the DECS website www.decs.sa.gov.au.

While the focus of the new resource is the Disability Standards for Education, its general purpose remains to help provide a more inclusive education for learners with disabilities. Inclusive education means that the school can provide a good education to all pupils irrespective of their varying abilities. All children will be treated with respect and ensure equal opportunities to learn together (UNESCO Education, 2004).

Implications for preschools and schools

All staff have responsibilities to ensure that children and students and their associates do not experience disability discrimination. It is not sufficient to be just familiar with the legislation. It is important to understand it and ensure that processes and practices enable children and students with disabilities to participate in the full range of educational programs or services, on the same basis and to the same extent as children and students without disabilities.

This means focusing on effective education that benefits all students, providing a vision of non-discriminatory practice to school communities, responding to the expectations of parents/carers in a way which is fair and reasonable, being open to constructive criticism from advocates, participating in professional development activities that increase knowledge, skills and understanding of disability awareness and the legislation, and avoiding unlawful discrimination on the basis of disability.

Conclusion

The increasing number of students with disabilities in all education sectors and the increased awareness within the disability sector of their entitlement in relation to education both support the need for nationally consistent standards to exist.

It is of fundamental importance that staff involved in the education of students with disabilities understand their legal and professional obligations in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Disability Standards for Education legislation. Equal opportunity doesn't mean treating everyone in the same way. The legal responsibility is to ensure that all children and students experience non-discriminatory access, participation and achievement in education and training.
DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1992 AND THE STANDARDS FOR EDUCATION 2005—IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

References


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COWBOYS AND KINDY KIDS

A Preschool Program Committed to Inclusive Practice

In 2001 I had the opportunity to visit a number of preschool programs in Denver Colorado that were part of a program known as Learning Experiences – an Alternate Program for Preschools (LEAP).

The program emphasises that all children can benefit from an integrated childhood environment. The program has a strong research basis of over 12 years that indicates the long term benefits of this approach. Although the program largely supports children with Autism it has relevance for all children with special needs.

I have run a number of workshops highlighting the philosophy of the Program including:
- Inclusivity
- Social benefits for all children.

The workshop focuses on the key elements of the program and challenges staff to become more aware of their program in terms of the typical children rather than always focusing on the children with special needs. It provides an opportunity to look at the curriculum and teaching programs to ensure that there are multiple opportunities for engagement throughout the preschool sessions.

The workshop explores the systematic social skills program that results in daily and communicative engagement for all peers. It also looks at the use of explicit teaching across multiple settings so that children have the opportunity to practice emerging skills.

It aims to focus on outcomes for both groups of children.

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**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES SWIMMING PROGRAM—FROM DEPENDENCE TO INDEPENDENCE IN THE WATER ENVIRONMENT**

Did you know that the Sports, Swimming and Aquatics Unit provides funding for the Students with Disabilities Swimming Program? Currently over 2,000 students with disabilities access this program.

**New Resource Kit For Students with Disabilities**

A new resource kit has been developed to support the Students with Disabilities Swimming Program. The resource kit provides information to assist schools and instructors in:

- Determining eligibility
- Identifying the learning outcomes, which can be achieved through the swimming program
- The development of an individualised swimming program.

The resource includes four levels which are linked with the SACSA Framework as follows:

- Preparation Level – Early Years Band (Birth to Age 3 and Age 3 to Age 5)
- Beginning Level - Early Years Band (Early Years Band - Reception to Year 2)
- Developing Level - Primary Years Band (Years 3, 4 and 5)
- Consolidating Level – Middle Years Band (Years 6,7 & 9).

Students will work at or across any of or all of these levels depending on their capabilities and achievements.

The resource also provides information:

- About activities to support the program
- On the selection of a suitable DECS approved centre
- On supervision responsibilities,
- On administration requirements.

The resource includes an assessment tool that assists with planning and programming and a reporting tool to assist in providing feedback to students, support staff and carers.


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**THE NON AVERSIVE APPROACHES TO MANAGING BEHAVIOUR PROJECT—2005**

Between March and November 2005 DECS supported a number of special education teachers to participate in the *Non aversive Approaches to Managing Behaviour* (NAMB) project. The project was based on the 4-day workshop by Gary LaVigna and Thomas Willis (Institute Applied Behaviour Analysis, USA) about developing positive approaches to managing challenging behaviour of students. The purpose of the project was to increase the skills and capacity of classroom teachers and their communities in managing challenging behaviour situations.

For this project, teachers of students identified with the most challenging behaviours in the state were invited to attend the 4-day workshop in Cairns. They then participated in a series of highly valued and successful follow up sessions to develop positive behaviour management plans for their targeted student or class. These 15 teachers networked and learnt from each other then shared their experiences, strategies and plans with their wider communities, often presenting at staff meetings and district sessions.
THE NON AVERSIVE APPROACHES TO MANAGING BEHAVIOUR PROJECT—2005

A further 30 teachers from special schools units and special classes were also invited to attend a second 4 day workshop in Adelaide in November. These teachers were given two follow up sessions to promote their understanding of positive behaviour approaches and assist them in developing behaviour management plans.

The Special Education Expo Workshop session described this project, its outcomes and the way La Vigna and Willis’s Multielement Plan could be adapted for teacher use in a simpler format. Twenty two participants at the Expo were given examples of the plans developed by the NAMB teachers and the ways these teachers changed their classrooms and teaching practice in more positive approaches using a variety of positive programming approaches and focussed support, including the use of a reward systems. The behaviour of their students in most situations became more manageable and the teachers less stressed.

The workshop participants were treated to tangible rewards to increase their motivation throughout the session and help them focus in the afternoon. A video of one of the NAMB teachers, where the teacher talked about how the NAMB project helped him make positive changes to his classroom teaching practice and increased his skills in managing behaviour concluded the session. The feedback indicated that all participants got a good overview of the NAMB project and a taste of positive behaviour strategies along with their chocolate frogs.

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THE LINK PROGRAM AT ROSS SMITH SECONDARY SCHOOL

Regency Park School caters for students with physical disabilities in five sites in the Metropolitan Area. The site at Regency Park primarily provides specialist educational and therapy requirements for students with a wide range of disabilities who require a specialist setting to obtain the optimum learning they need. However, the four other sites cater for students who are socially and cognitively able to function within a mainstream setting with support for their physical requirements.

Two of these are primary schools (Madison Park Primary and Mitcham Primary Schools) and two are secondary schools (Ross Smith Secondary and Unley High).

In 1996, Regency Park School and Ross Smith Secondary School formed a collaborative partnership, recognising the importance of providing students with disabilities the opportunity to attend, participate and succeed in a mainstream setting along side their peers. The collaboration identified the need for students with disabilities to have support additional to what would be available to them in a traditional mainstream environment if they were to have the opportunity to develop and achieve towards their potential. The association enables higher levels of individualised support (in a variety of forms dependent on the individual student) to be provided in the least restrictive environment possible. Called the Link Program, it currently has 10 students ranging from year’s 9 to 13, who, in addition to their mainstream subject load are embarking on a Community Access Program for Students addressing transitional and personal development requirements to make informed choices regarding their future.
Students in the Link Program attend school on the Ross Smith Secondary School site, and are treated as part of the mainstream regarding behaviour management, school functions, school uniform and so on, but are actually enrolled as Regency Park School students. Both Schools have formed a relationship that recognises the individual needs of students with special requirements, while promoting and educating the whole school community in the social values of tolerance, empathy and understanding with regard to students with differing challenges. Students involved in the program can access services from both schools. The expectation is that the student will be able to become involved or gain assistance and support from whichever site is most relevant at the time. An example of this is that the majority of students in the Program attend one swimming session a week at Regency Park School (an option not available on the Ross Smith Secondary School site but considered important for their health/mobility), but may also participate in Ross Smith’s music program.

Post School Options
In 2003 teachers and parents met for discussions and were mutually concerned for student's options regarding post school transition as they approached their South Australian Certificate In Education (SACE) years. Many parents expressed apprehension that their child didn’t have the skills necessary to successfully pursue their optimum post school options, despite completing their SACE studies. There was common concern at the lack of opportunities for students with physical disabilities to access the work force (even when cognitively able). Pathways to further education were clearer but there was still concern for the students entering the workforce after completing their post-school studies. For many students, tertiary or extra study is an unrealistic option highlighting a void in the current system. Link teachers collaborated with parents, students and other service providers to develop a program attempting to address the identified issues. A period of six months followed in which parents and teachers worked together to research and investigate current programs, adapting/adopting others, and discussing the validity and essential elements. The amalgamation of ideals has been incorporated into a program that will be on going and across all year and ability levels, and supported at home. The result is the Community Access Program for Students (CAPS). CAPS is currently in its third year of operation.

While benefits of the program have been recognised, difficulties have also been identified. Understanding the complexities of disabilities (physical, intellectual, emotional and social) has been a difficult aspect for all parties to comprehend. Modifications have occurred and further alterations for the following semester are being planned so that the ideals and concepts underlying the CAPS are not lost in curriculum red tape.

The discussions, consultation and research identified that the program would need to ensure:

- That students completing studies have the skills required to fulfilled their potential once they leave secondary school.
- That students develop the life skills that are most beneficial to their long term outcomes. If students could receive direct learning in this area – the school, supported by home/families and other agencies, is considered the most appropriate site for this learning.
- That the transition process to post school options is clear and well documented. Parents and students expressed anxiety about the process used and ways to improve post school outcomes.
- That the core life skills are related to the concepts of self-determination and self efficacy as having the most widespread and long term benefit for the individual and the community.
The Regency Park Link Program situated at Ross Smith Secondary School developed a Community Access Program for Students (CAPS) with physical and associated disabilities whilst they integrate into the mainstream curriculum.

The Program provides the opportunity for students to make choices and decisions, to explore and take risks and to learn from experiences of success and failure develop abilities and attitudes necessary to become self-determined adults.

### 1. Purpose/Goals
- Students have skills in self-determination
- Students participate to their fullest extent in their NEP meeting
- Students can name their disability/disabilities and comprehend their strengths and needs
- Students and parents appreciate the relevance of the NEP process and why student's are involved in the process
- Students identify the areas they need assistance with at school and home
- Students invite relevant stakeholders to their NEP meeting
- Students are aware of their disability/disabilities and are able to talk to their strengths and needs to relevant stakeholders and parents.

### 2. Specific Tasks to be Undertaken
- Development of teaching methodology and staff interaction that facilitates self determination
- Development of teaching materials to support students understanding of themselves.
- Students are assisted in developing self-determination skills by learning to work towards goals (short term and long term)
- Students to take responsibility for their own actions and decisions (groups and individually)
- Students have many opportunities to make choices (group and individually)
- Students learn about the roles of people who can assist them make decisions and choices (stakeholders)
- Students learn how and where to contact stakeholders relevant to their strengths and needs
- Students to lead a designated aspect of, or all of their NEP.

### 3. Expected Outcomes
- Students have progressed towards learning and accepting their disability/disabilities
- Parents understand and support the relevance of their child’s participation in the NEP process
- All relevant stakeholders are invited/present at the NEP meeting
- All relevant aspects of the students needs are addressed and identified.
Student Led Negotiated Education Plans

It was decided to embed the concepts of promoting and teaching self efficacy and self determination within Community Studies with the aim of directly being able to view student development in these areas through a number of activities (school and community based) and especially through their Negotiated Education Plan (NEP) and transition plan participation.

Recent research has shown students (especially those with disabilities) who are involved in their education and possess self-determination strategies have increased positive outcomes with regard to post-school outcomes. Through increased student involvement in specific curriculum areas, students should be given the opportunity to develop self-determination skills. The process needs to include direct teaching, opportunities for students to practise skills and experiences by which their processes are validated. It is believed that through such strategies post-school success is optimised.

Student involvement in the Negotiated Education Plan (NEP) and Web-based Transition Plan processes provides a framework to embed into curriculum areas such as Community Studies and develop opportunities for the development of self-determination and essential life skills.

A program that actively encourages student involvement and incorporates the development of student self-determination and life skills has been developed and trialled within the context of Community Studies (Stage 1 and 2) in 2004, 2005 and currently in 2006. Through the program over the past 3 years, students have gained skills to increase their participation in their NEP.

The increase in student involvement is viewed as an indicator of increased self-determination and self-efficacy. As of November/December 2005, students in the Link Program invited key stakeholders, led the meeting and actively participated in the development of their NEP review for their specific learning outcomes of 2006.

Students are evolving and emerging from learned helplessness and acquired behaviours including passivity and low self-esteem (due to their physical and associated disabilities) to the development of independence, self-confidence and calculated risk taking. The program enables students to start recognising and putting in place the steps needed in acquiring self-efficacy, self-empowerment, self-determination and achievable realistic goals toward the transition from school to post school options.

The course continues to flourish, with adaptations using the Bounce Back books, whilst identifying strategies pertaining to individual challenges and the increased knowledge of learning to understand and accept their individualised challenges; realising how they best learn; discussions and practical learning situations regarding independence; developing self-observation, evaluation and positive reinforcement skills.

In 2003 two teachers developed this program whilst undertaking a Graduate Certificate in Disability Studies: Transition. Today Cheryl McGill remains in the Link Program, while Niki Baratosy has taken time off to have 2 babies, and has recently returned to Regency Park School on a contract basis.

Contact: Cheryl McGill, Teacher, Ross Smith Secondary School
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E-mail: cheryl.mcgill@rosssmithhs.sa.edu.au
Prospect Centre (including the Hyde St Program) and Daws Road Centre provide programs for students 15 years and over which assist with the transition from school to post school options. Students must be enrolled & attending a Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) site, be identified as a student with a disability and have a current Negotiated Curriculum Plan (NEP). Students are able to access:

- SACE Stages 1 & 2 programs based at the Centres
- Cluster programs providing for the needs of students in cooperatively aligned schools
- A range of competency based modules (VET)
- Work placement and work experience programs
- Support in pathways planning to employment and/or training.

All programs incorporate life and employment skills through:

- Community awareness and mobility
- Social skills development
- Increased numeracy and literacy skills
- Practical skill development
- Personal development.

Technology & The Community – Woodwork/Target Work

One of the programs run at Prospect Centre is Technology & The Community – Woodwork/Target Work. The students participating in these groups have an interest in wood work or general construction work and want to gain additional skills and experiences using a range of tools and equipment while at the Centre and on community work sites. The woodwork students design individual projects in the areas of box construction, framing and cabinet making, producing work that highlights their skills.

By working on a variety of community projects in construction areas the Target Work group develop a number of skills that will useful to them in personal work and in a team setting. Target Work is a practical skills training initiative of DECS based on construction programs for students and youth with a career focus on trades.

To establish a base level of understanding for the student groups, activities are developed which involved them in the following preliminary tasks:

- Safety procedures and documentation
- Basic design and planning skills
- Measuring and marking out project components
- Cutting out materials and assembly processes
- Completing projects.

Within each course Occupational, Health, Safety and Welfare (OHS&W) Vocational Education and training (VET) modules are taught, such as Safety Signs and Information. Each session utilises procedures so that students develop and maintain safe work practices. Safety preparation and understanding are vital skills necessary for future employment.

Contact: Helen Joyce, Manager, Prospect Centre
Telephone: 8344 6508.
E-mail: helen.joyce@proscentsp.sa.edu.au

Contact: John Anusz, Teacher Prospect Centre
Telephone: 8344 6508.
E-mail: anusz.helen@prospectsp.sa.edu.au
Rationale
The Retail Sector employs 32% of total Youth Employment. Young people may gain retail employment as sales assistants, checkout operators, store people, night fillers, in stock recovery, and as retail office clerks/receptionists. Given the diverse range of opportunities available for employment in the retail sector, transition to work for young people is advantaged through having the option to undertake retail studies.

Daws Road Centre currently offers students support in achieving competency in Certificate I and II Retail Operations through Technical and Further Education South Australia (tafeSA), Noarlunga.

DRC/Retail Snapshot
In 2005 Daws Road operated a pilot program with tafeSA, that has extended to 2006. In 2006, 11 students completed Certificate I and there are currently 10 students in the process of completing Certificate II. Students attend the Noarlunga campus one day per week, completing Certificate I in Semester 1 and Certificate II in Semester 2. Students complete 10 days of work experience in a range of retail environments throughout the year; including an option to complete some of their work experience at Raw Trade a learning retail shop at the Noarlunga campus. Students have completed work experience at a variety of retailers including Kmart, Harris Scarfe, Foodland, florists, pet stores, nurseries, hardware stores and clothing stores. Students have undertaken a diverse range of activities at these retailers including customer service, merchandising, stock control and housekeeping.

Desired Student Outcomes
Completion of training in Retail Operations aims to prepare young people for employment in the retail industry through achievement of:

- Developing the ability to perform a range of tasks and roles using discretion about possible action within established routines and methods in a retail workplace
- Learning pre-established standard methods and procedures to solve problems in a retail environment
- Developing the ability to communicate clearly and coherently so that information is organised for a purpose within a retail environment
- Understanding assessment and recording of information within a retail environment
- Monitoring the outcomes of their own work and follow through activities to learn from their performance
- Implementing guidelines for OHS&W
- Utilising technical skills to operate within the retail workplace
- Working with others to achieve agreed objectives within specified timeframes.

Curriculum Summary
Students complete a number of modules in each certificate in order to achieve certification.

Certificate I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>UNIT</th>
<th>HOURS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WRRCS1B</td>
<td>Communicate</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRRLP1B</td>
<td>Safe Work Practices</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRRM2B</td>
<td>Housekeeping Duties</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRRCA1B</td>
<td>Operate Retail Equipment</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRRER1B</td>
<td>Work Effectively With Others</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Certificate II incorporates completion of units in Certificate I (with clustering, students complete 382 nominal hours of training). Achievement of competency requires students to complete 2 weeks of work experience.

Assessment
Students are assessed using a variety of methods based on an integration of the workplace competencies into holistic activities.

Units of competency are grouped to allow clear links with the competency standards.

Student Feedback
Student feedback about the program has included the following comments:

- We have learnt lots of things about retail and work, like merchandising and how to work together as a team. I have found the course interesting and fun. I learnt a lot, like working with other people. It's made me more confident in larger groups.
- I have learnt how to communicate with people a lot more this year in the Retail course and it has built up my confidence.
- Through work experience and the course I have learnt about getting along with others.
- On surveying students about how the program prepared them for work experience, all students indicated that their preparation was positive. All students indicated that the program prepared them for work.

Future Directions
Certificate I in Retail Operations will be delivered in Semester 1, 2007, by Andrew Ward.

The program will be delivered at the Unley Community Centre. The location enables students access to a wide range of retailers through the Unley Shopping Centre. Andrew has an extensive background in retail that started when he was studying at school and has continued throughout his working life. He is currently completing RPL in Retail
CERTIFICATE I AND II RETAIL OPERATIONS AT DAWS ROAD CENTRE

Students will be supported to achieve competency in Certificate II through tafeSA in Semester 2.

Further Information

Contact: Andrew Ward, Teacher, Daws Road Centre
Telephone: 8277 6504
Email: andrew.ward@drcss.sa.edu.au

Consultation On Better Pathways For Young People With A Disability

The Premier of South Australia, Hon Mike Rann MP, has sought advice from the Social Inclusion Board on *Ways to improve the transition from school to further education, training, employment and day options for young people with a disability aged 15 -24 in South Australia.*

A series of public forums has been conducted in metropolitan and regional South Australia as well as focus groups of young people with a range of disabilities and their families.

Anyone with an interest in this area is invited to provide comments in the following ways:

- Complete the Phone-in Survey open September 25th - 29th, 8am-6pm. Phone 1800 232 532. For support with the phone-in survey access the National Relay Service by calling 133 677, or use the speech to speech relay service by calling 1300 555 727.
- Complete a written submission in response to the discussion paper located @ www.socialinclusion.sa.gov.au <http://www.socialinclusion.sa.gov.au> and either post to: Disability Reference, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Social Inclusion Unit, GPO Box 2343 Adelaide 5001, or email socialinclusion@saugov.sa.gov.au <mailto:socialinclusion@saugov.sa.gov.au>

*Maurice Corcoran AM*
Senior Policy Officer: Disability
Social Inclusion Unit
Premier & Cabinet
Level 11, State Administration Centre
Mondays, Wednesdays and Friday morning
DX 56201
Ph: 82260483 fax: 82260560 M: 0411659210
This CD, with accompanying lyric notebook, contains 18 songs from various parts of the world, including: We’re the Children of the World; Whole New World; Edelweiss; Jamaica Farewell; Rasa Sayang; La Cucuracha.

Strategic Spelling Middle Primary A, Firmstone, G et al, 1996. 67-0517-01.
This whole school spelling program supports the principles outlined in the First Steps spelling materials and develops spelling strategies through explicit teaching activities.

This book details a study which investigated established interagency initiatives on disciplinary exclusion from schools in three Scottish local authorities.

Sensory and Social Emotional Set—Interactive Communication Cards, Green, J, 2003. 61-0745-01.
These cards, designed by special educators to enable and enhance communication opportunities, focus on sensory and social emotional aspects.

Read Your Way to Maths Book 3, Griffiths, R; Clyne, M, 1996. 64-1317-03.
This book provides teachers with a wide range of activities for children in the upper years of primary school that link mathematics and literature in meaningful ways.
See also: 64-1317-01 Book 1 (Lower Primary); 64-1317-02 Book 2 (Middle Primary).

This book contains a twelve-month curriculum, for early years learners, that integrates motor skill development with communication, socialisation and cognitive skill development.

This 75-minute DVD contains ten Bananas in Pyjamans adventures and 30 nursery rhymes.

The methods described in this book are based on the belief that learners grow in their understanding of vocabulary and spelling over time as they encounter and study words in a variety of settings.

Alphabet Lacing. 69-0288-01.
Learners thread the laces through the cards, matching the initial sound to the correct picture. Each picture teaches a corresponding sound for each letter of the alphabet.

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Play and Imagination In Children with Autism, Wolfberg, P. 19-0196-01.
This research based book, examines the complex problems learners’ with autism experience in reciprocal social interaction, communication and imagination. It examines the nature of the disorder in relation to play’s role in childhood culture and development, as well as current intervention practices.
NEW RESOURCES

These cards, most suitable for senior primary and secondary school learners, are useful for discussing topics, reconstructing events, feelings, linking different forms of communication and outcomes, alternative styles of communication and signify a range of communication styles.

Tackling Tables, Activities to Promote the Teaching and Learning of Multiplication Facts, Swan, P, 2001. 64-1327-01.
This book, containing reproducible blackline masters, provides educators with a range of alternatives to the stand drill and practice activities used for teaching multiplication facts (tables).

These coloured pictures depict 44 different situations that help learners to focus on the social behaviour area of personal development. Some of the cards illustrate effective use of social skills whilst others show a lack of understanding of these skills.

These coloured pictures depict 44 different situations that help learners to focus on personal relationships and how to define and understand them. The cards illustrate how relationships develop and the different kinds and levels of relationships.

This topic of this book is learners from birth through to age eight with a focus on individuals—some identified as having disabilities, other delayed in their development, as well as those at-risk for problems in learning and development due to exposure to adverse genetic, biological or environmental conditions.

This book, designed to support early childhood practitioners in meeting the needs of all children in their childhood setting, bridges the gap between child development and strategies for inclusion. Each chapter introduces a child (ages birth to 8 years) with one or more special needs, including Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Turner Syndrome, ADHD, Emotional/Behavioural Disorders, Apraxia, Down Syndrome, Giftedness and Juvenile Diabetes.

These coloured pictures depict 44 different situations that assist learners to identify and discuss health and safety issues. Some of the cards illustrate imminent danger and other show possible longer term effects.

PLEASE NOTE:

SwitchIt! Maker 2
Date & Time: Friday 27 October 2006, 12.30—4.30pm
Cost: $170 GST inclusive.
(Includes a fully licensed copy of the software and a companion CD to install at their school.)
The cost is per two participants (a teacher and an SSO is the preferred option).
Location: Special Education Resource Unit, 72A Marlborough Street, Henley Beach.
SwitchIt! Maker 2 is especially designed so that children can make activities as part of a lesson.
The simple editor helps even young children and those with severe learning difficulties to make
their own stories as part of a creative class activity. There is a freely distributable player version
enabling students to take their activities home or play them on any computer in the school.
For more information contact: Alister Davies—alister.davies@seru.sa.edu.au

Inclusive Practices for Students with Language Disorder
Date & Time: Wednesday 1 November 2006, 4.30—6.30pm
Cost: $15.00 GST inclusive.
Location: Special Education Resource Unit, 72A Marlborough Street, Henley Beach.
For more information contact: Carol Edwards/Jill Bailes—admin@seru.sa.edu.au
For registration contact: Jeanne Hall—jeanne.hall@seru.sa.edu.au

Using Visual Communication Strategies in the Classroom
Date & Time: Wednesday 8 November 2006, 4.30—6.30pm
Cost: $15.00 GST inclusive.
Location: Special Education Resource Unit, 72A Marlborough Street, Henley Beach.
For more information contact: Carol Edwards/Jill Bailes—admin@seru.sa.edu.au
For registration contact: Jeanne Hall—jeanne.hall@seru.sa.edu.au

Oral Language in the Curriculum
Date & Time: Wednesday 15 November 2006, 4.30—6.30pm
Cost: $15.00 GST inclusive.
Location: Special Education Resource Unit, 72A Marlborough Street, Henley Beach.
For more information contact: Carol Edwards/Jill Bailes—admin@seru.sa.edu.au
For registration contact: Jeanne Hall—jeanne.hall@seru.sa.edu.au

Boardmaker Workshop
Date & Time: Thursday 16 November 2006, 1.30—4.30pm
Cost: $16.50 GST inclusive.
Location: Special Education Resource Unit, 72A Marlborough Street, Henley Beach.
For more information contact: Carol Edwards/Jill Bailes—admin@seru.sa.edu.au
For registration contact: Jeanne Hall—jeanne.hall@seru.sa.edu.au

Clicker 5 Workshop
Date & Time: Friday 17 November 2006, 9.00am—4.00pm
Cost: $16.50 GST inclusive.
Location: Special Education Resource Unit, 72A Marlborough Street, Henley Beach.
For more information contact: Jim Sprialis—jim.sprialis@seru.sa.edu.au
For registration contact: Jeanne Hall—jeanne.hall@seru.sa.edu.au