



Newsletter

February 2005

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Editorial

We begin another year with many changes, challenges and opportunities on the educational horizon. This year we will see the introduction of the Mathematics and English syllabus, continuing consultation for an updated Education Laws for the future, and the Board of Teacher Registration's desire to raise the professional status of teachers are just some of the challenges ahead.

While some of these may be welcomed and concerns raised with others, the Remedial and Support Teachers' Association of Queensland will be there to advocate for the needs of support teachers who in turn support the needs of our most vulnerable - children with learning difficulties. Our centre piece professional development will be the joint conference being presented with Learning Difficulties Australia and SPELD, which will feature international and local presenters. This conference will take place in September. This first newsletter comes to all Queensland support teachers free to advertise our advocacy and professional development.

From the President

A new year, a fresh start, new books, new colouring pencils and a uniform that doesn't fit. As teachers we contemplate a new class, perhaps a new school, perhaps even a change in our focus.

But for all of us – teachers and students – it is an adventure in teaching and learning and a chance to do things better.

For RSTAQ it will mean continuing in our roles as advocate and professional development provider.

We will continue to advocate for you – in meetings with the QTU, Education Queensland and in sitting on cross sector committees – like

Dates for 2005:

- **Saturday February 12**, General Meeting of RSTAQ, Rainworth State School
- **Saturday March 12**, Annual General Meeting of RSTAQ, Rainworth State School
- **September 9-10**, Bi-annual Conference, Hilton Hotel Brisbane. **Conference Keynote Speaker: Kevin Wheldall** - Ten practical ways to help students with special learning needs in your class.

the current Inlan review. We will communicate with you through this newsletter and our professional journal *Perspectives*.

This issue is going to all schools in Queensland and so you may have received this newsletter even if you are not a member of the Remedial and Support Teachers' Association. If you like what you see – feel free to join us (an application form is included with this mailing). Whether a member or not you are welcome at our combined conference in September (more details later in the newsletter). Members are invited to our Annual General Meeting on March 12. Member or not, you are welcome to come and hear Dr Adrian Ashman speak on "*The Outcomes of Inclusion*".

Outcomes for inclusion - an abstract.

At this time when there is so much change occurring and so much speculation in the media it is important that we work together to get the best for ourselves as professional providers and for the students with whom we work.

The move to more inclusive forms of schooling, whereby students with special learning needs are taught alongside their typically developing peers in regular classrooms, can be viewed as a threat or an opportunity to teachers. A threat, perhaps, because managing a class of up to thirty (or even more) students is a big enough ask without having to take on students who may seem even harder to teach. An opportunity because teaching students with special learning needs can provide the necessary catalyst

for teachers to re-examine their role, their skills and their methods.

In this address, I will argue that meeting the special learning needs of included students will require teachers to learn new skills and teaching methods that will be of proven benefit to the teaching of all students in their classes. Teaching students with special learning needs should really be no different to the effective teaching of all students.

For over thirty years, I have been involved in research geared towards helping students with special learning needs to learn more effectively, and helping teachers of such students to teach more effectively. In this address, I would like to draw on my research and to review, briefly, what I believe to be ten simple, straightforward and, above all, practical ways of helping teachers to teach students with special learning needs in regular classes.

RSTAQ Aims and Objectives

The Remedial and Support Teachers' Association of Queensland advocates for and supports teaching professionals working with students experiencing Learning Difficulties and Learning Disabilities across all education sectors.

We value

- professionals working in schools in the support teaching role;
- quality professional development;
- collegiate professional networking and support;
- access to decision making forums that have an effect on support teachers.

RSTAQ's Mission is to

- advocate for the ongoing recognition and valuing of the role of specialist teachers;
- communicate with RSTAQ members, educational management systems and other professional bodies to inform, promote and enhance professional knowledge and skills;
- provide appropriate professional development;
- participate in decision making forums;
- promote RSTAQ to education; professionals, education management systems and other professional bodies;
- recognize the importance of specialist qualifications and successful classroom teaching experience.

Benefits of membership:

- Discounts on conferences organised by RSTAQ

or in conjunction with our sister organizations Learning Difficulties Australia and SPELD.

- Access to Education Queensland via a professional organization.
- Receive the benefits of collective advocacy.
- Receive a bi-annual professional magazine and quarterly newsletters.
- Access to an established website.

We encourage you to join and let your voice be heard.

Yours sincerely

David Waterworth, President



Resource Review

Words their Way series, Donald Bear, Marcia Invernizzi, Shane Templeton and Francine Johnston:

- Words Their Way, Third Edition (provides the theory and assessment techniques) \$US32.00
- Words Their Way: Letter and Picture Sorts for Emergent Readers (available January 2005)
- Words Their Way: Word Sorts for Letter Name Alphabetic Spellers \$US16.00
- Words Their Way: Words Sorts for Within-Word Pattern Spellers \$US16.00
- Words Their Way: Syllables and Affixes \$US16.00
- Words Their Way: Words Sorts for Derivational Constancy (available February 2005)

These texts were written by researchers who have influenced the philosophy behind the approach to spelling in the 2005 Queensland English syllabus. Written by teachers who are noted authorities in the field of spelling and word study. It combines discussions of theory and practical assessment tools and techniques with over 250 ready-to-use word study, spelling, vocabulary, and phonics activities presented in a developmental sequence from pre-literate through the derivational constancy stage. It shows students how to work with picture and word sorting; how to use word banks at the beginning levels; and how to incorporate word study into reading and writing.

Using fairly simple tests, "Words Their Way" helps you to determine placement in a phase of children's spelling development. The subsequent books give you many word sorting activities to help children construct the meaning behind the spelling of English, not just a set of rules to learn.

I purchased my copies from amazon.com; however your favourite bookshop can get them.