



Perspectives

November, 2004

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Editorial

One of the major conundrums for educational systems is how to effect genuine change in teaching practice. In this time of great flux for all teachers including Learning Support Teachers, there is great pressure to implement innovative, inclusive practices that can advantage students with a diversity of needs. Apart from the requirements to respond to the issues of inclusive practice, a whole raft of curriculum changes have been stamped into schools over the last few years throwing the professional lives of both classroom and specialist teachers into disarray.

The problem with such an avalanche of change is that schools find it impossible to determine the priorities for implementation. It is hardly surprising then that Support Teachers should experience confusion relating to their role. In a recent article of the *Journal of Learning Disabilities* (vol.37, no. 5, 2004), the problems of role overload, role conflict, and role ambiguity are discussed. Of great concern, apart from the abundant personal issues involved, is the reduced likelihood that research-based practices will be implemented resulting in the employment of interventions that may not be based on the best quality information available.

At our recent conference, 'Diversity is the Norm', Don Rice from the University of Southern Queensland highlighted the need to be cognizant of and guided by the practices that have received validation through quantitative and qualitative research. For example, 'Reciprocal teaching' is one strategy that has received frequent endorsement in the literature. It is undeniable that Learning Support teachers are generally passionate about learning more about their craft and improving their professional profile. But it would be fair to admit that the challenge of applying and establishing new found approaches, as an integral part of mainstream practice is indeed a daunting one. The challenges for us to be part of such

substantial change are many. For a dose of hard realism, it is worth referring to Janette Klingner's article on 'The science of professional development' available through the same issue of the *Journal of Learning Disabilities* cited above.

She suggests that for change to be sustained in scaling up research, ownership needs to occur at multiple levels. She states, that unless 'reading leaders (read ST:LDs), district and school-level administrators, and teachers take over ownership of the practices, it is unlikely the practices will take hold and spread'. She highlights some of the facilitators to the sustained use of effective practice. These include:

- Coaches and mentors to provide feedback, help problem solve, and provide assistance in learning the critical components of practices;
- Opportunities to observe demonstrations of the practices;
- Administrative support (e.g., clear expectations that practices are important, scheduled time for planning and implementation, help with resources, a reward structure);
- A community of practice (i.e., a network of teachers using the practices who dialogue, help one another, and encourage risk taking)
- Help with materials and other resources' (Klingner 2004).

It is interesting as well to note that at the school level one recommendation is that 'requests for teachers to learn or implement other, competing practices while the targeted instructional practices are being learned and implemented' be limited. Undoubtedly, an administrator playing a gate-keeping role that rationalizes the flow of demands would be very welcome and would contribute to the process of orderly change.

So how can we make sense of the role and its competing demands in 2004?

In short, as professionals we may be so busy 'doing', implementing our practice on the run that there is little time to reflect, plan, and collaborate with colleagues. As the 'paediatricians' of the education system it is an absolute necessity for us to continue to update our knowledge base and reassess the strategies we use and the processes of implementation.

While the collective expertise of Support Teachers has always been impressive our challenge for the near future is how to convert this capital into approaches and strategies that impact more dynamically in inclusive settings. Collaborative practice is one approach that we need to explore thoroughly in conjunction with strategies that have a solid research base. Some recent articles in the *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, exploring crucial issues, in particular the implementation of research-based practice, are worthy of our consideration.

To continue with more of the same is likely in the long term to jeopardize our standing in schools. This would be a retrograde step as schools are faced with complex challenges that require sustained collaborative problem solving. Surely Learning Support Teachers are in an ideal position to broker some much needed 'renovations'.

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REFLECTIONS ON A CONFERENCE PAST

On a refreshingly chilly winter morning at the start of the June holidays, over 70 teachers found themselves on the campus of the University of Southern Queensland keen to learn from an eclectic range of academics, practitioners and therapists.

Who can forget the dancing pig in Cinderella? Or Don Rice's tongue in cheek discourse on 'Efluvia Acoustic therapy'? From there we moved to the breakout rooms to hear about Collaborative Strategic Reading, Stress Free Teaching Strategies or another of the many courses on offer at this pedagogic smorgasbord.

Great catering and informal networking punctuated the day with groups of teachers sitting on the grass in the sun discussing what they were learning.

Evaluations indicated that you appreciated the relevance of the subject matter presented and also that it was local.

It is our plan to bring you more regional seminars, in partnership with tertiary institutions. This is in response to the survey information we collected earlier this year (see it was worth filling it in). Another survey will come to you early next year please communicate with us and let us know how your association can serve you better.

In September 2005 we will be collaborating with SPELD and LDA to bring you a world-

class conference in Brisbane and in 2006 we expect to mount a one day conference on the Sunshine coast. With your support they will be as successful as this one proved to be.

Advocating for STLDS ...

Your association is currently representing you on the Inlan steering committee.

INLAN (Interventions in Literacy and Numeracy) is a research study designed to enhance both understanding of learning difficulties in literacy and numeracy and effectiveness in providing support for students in Years 4 to 7. It is funded by the Commonwealth under the States Grants (Primary and Secondary Education Assistance) Act 2000 for a project on Effective Teaching and Learning Practices for Students with Learning Difficulties in Queensland.

Many of you will have recently filled in the survey form. Your information will be used to make far-reaching judgements about the provision of support for students experiencing LD.

Your association currently represents you at the Joint Council of Queensland teacher Associations.

The Queensland Teachers Union is considering support for a rewrite of Appraisalment in line with further Systemic Reforms from EQ (e.g., Outcomes based education).

Please note that the Secondary Education Resource now available on line is at:

<http://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/advocacy/access/equity/students/inclusion/learning/framework.html>

ORAL LANGUAGE IN THE CLASSROOM



Judith Rathmell is a Speech Language Pathologist, currently employed by Education Queensland to service schools in Toowoomba and Darling Downs Districts. She has been working part-time with Education Queensland over the past five years. Prior to this, she had worked full-time for six years for Queensland Health, in the Child, Youth Mental Health Service. She has a background in neurologically based speech/language disorders, having worked for a number of years with adult acquired brain injury. Her experience from various educational settings – primary, secondary, and special education facilities inform her current interests in the place of oral language in the classroom.

The Speech Language Pathologist for the Darling Downs Judith Rathmell presented a session on Oral Language entitled ‘Oral Language in Focus’ –with links to the new English Syllabus. It was subtitled ‘Creating a talk rich classroom’

Judith in collaboration with Sharyn McDonald and Rebecca Brown, Speech and Language Pathologists from the Darling Downs and Toowoomba, received a grant to create an oral language program because they had noticed the large number of reports they were writing acknowledging deficits in oral language. They wondered if this was an area that could be developed within the classroom. They also recognised that a new Queensland English Syllabus was about to be launched which has as one of its major strands ‘Speaking and Listening’ or ‘Oral Language’. They noted that this was an opportunity to get in on the ground floor and revitalise the potentialities of oral language in the curriculum. Judith’s (two) conference presentations were 50minute versions of a series of three hour workshops she and her colleagues presented in many schools in Toowoomba and the Darling Downs.

Before proceeding, a short anecdotal digression ...

At a Support Teachers /AVT/SLP Network day earlier this year a writer for the new English Syllabus addressed the audience for the day on the history, components and theory behind the new syllabus. During one of the breaks the presenter spoke to Judith saying that she apologised for not having as much to say about oral language. Judith replied that she thought the whole presentation was focussed on oral language. I hope that this is a reflection of the integrated nature of the new syllabus.

During this short paper I will try to summarise some of the major points during Judith’s presentation. Firstly Judith reminded her audience of the components of oral language. You will recognise these components in reports written by speech pathologists.

Oral Language Components Table 1
(revisited)

	Receptive Language	Expressive Language
Phonology	Auditory discrimination	Articulation
Semantics	Classification	Vocabulary/providing descriptions
Syntax	Understanding meaning related to grammatical markers	Using correct grammar or complex sentences
Pragmatics	Reading non-verbals	Using situation appropriate language

Judith began with an examination of teacher talk. A teacher friend of Judith's wanted to know about the quality of her language interactions in the classroom. Judith presented a transcript of a teacher conversation in the classroom and highlighted the various interactions. During her analysis she found a couple of instances where the conversation advanced oral language. The majority of the interactions were of a directional and behavioural nature, probably a fairly typical classroom. To improve the quality of oral language Judith suggested that the following elements could be considered.

Teacher Talk

- Teacher talk versus listening
- Teacher talking versus student talking
- Telling or directing versus 'wondering' or posing hypotheses
- Regulating classroom behaviour versus communicating information
- Asking questions versus commenting
- Asking questions related to memory for facts versus those stimulating interpretation, analysis, comparison and evaluation.

It's a very tall order indeed to keep all of these elements in mind during the hurly burly of the classroom. Judith does have several suggestions to help both the teaching and learning in the field of oral language.

She suggests that we can use Blank's levels of questioning. Named after Marion Blank, a developmental psychologist who specialised in reading and oral language for more than 25 years. Dr. Blank authored and co-authored numerous articles and books including the 'Language of learning: The preschool years', on reading, language development, and learning in young children, and has received international recognition as an authority in these areas.

Blank suggested four levels of questions, which could serve the dual purpose of assessing a child's language and aiding the teacher in devising more challenging questions. Her intervention is based on two dimensions, the perceptual and language distance. Most concrete questions relate to the here and now concrete situations where students can easily perceive what is being discussed. Where more abstract questions are being posed, the language distance is further removed from a child's immediate experiences. The four levels of questions that comprise Blank's model are presented below.

Level 1

The information is directly supplied-it is in front of the child at the time or just removed. The responses required are short or non-verbal eg.

- Find one like this?
- What did you hear?
- What is this?
- What did you see?
- Say this: "Open the door"

Level 2

The information is supplied but not directly apparent. The child has to select what to attend to eg; size, colour, function of object.

- Find one that can cut.
- What's happening?
- What colour is this?

- Who/ What? When?
- How are these different?
- Name something that is an animal.

Level 3

The language does not relate directly to what they see or hear but instead the child must think and reorder the information given.

- What will happen next?
- What could he/she say?
- Tell this story
- How are these the same?
- Find the things that are **not** animals.
- Name something that can fly but is not a bird.
- What is an apple?

Level 4

The child has to reason beyond what is said, heard or seen. The child needs to draw on past experience, make parallels, examine causes and likely effects as well as justify the decision made.

- What will happen if?
- Why will...?
- Why wouldn't it ?
- What could you do?
- How can we tell?
- Why can't we...?

As you can see these questions increase in difficulty. The levels provide an insight into the level of complexity that is needed to develop higher order thinking. Ask your speech language pathologist for a more detailed examination of each of these.

The main part of Judith's presentation revolved around an excellent text, which gives many ideas for increasing the level and quality of oral language in the classroom. The text is 'Time for Talking' written by Love and Reilly. These are the same authors of the popular text 'Sound Way'. Although this text is mainly for children in the early years elements of these can be incorporated into middle and upper years. Judith spent time expanding each of the following areas through activities which turned the sessions into an interactive workshops.

Time for Talking

• Story Telling

Introduces children to the language and predicability of narrative structure. 'Story scripts' enable us to represent our own experiences and participate in the real and imagined happenings of others. Children can organise spoken texts using appropriate features to signal beginnings and endings, speak to a familiar formal group using the support of audio, visual or computer technology prepare, rehearse and present a variety of short spoken texts for known audiences (English Syllabus Cu.2.1)

• Describing

Children's first descriptors are mostly adjectives, then adverbs and then expanded verb and noun phrases. Their understanding and use of analogies such as similes and metaphors can be expanded using jokes, poetry and activities such as visualising and verbalising and barrier games. (English Syllabus Cu.2.1, 3.1, 4.1)

- **Recounting and reporting**

This involves telling facts and could use a structure such as a news telling plan -who, what, when, where, why? (English Syllabus Op.4.1; Cr 4.1)

- **Active Listening**

Active listening allows the child to practise identifying meaning from tone and emphasis. Barrier games are useful here also. (English Syllabus Cu.2.1, 3.1, 4.1)

- **Instructions**

Short-term memory is a most important factor here. Children need to learn to carry out staged messages. Chinese whispers is a fun activity that could help enhance this skill. (English Syllabus Cu.1.1; Op 2.1, 4.1; Cu.3.1, 4.1)

- **Vocabulary Connections**

Everyone has a speaking, listening, reading and writing vocabulary. A casual appraisal of a weekend's interaction involving language skills would likely reveal that speaking and listening account for the greatest majority of those interactions. Semantic webs and word circles are good for developing vocabulary. (English Syllabus Cu.1.1; Op 2.1 4.1, 3.1; Cr.3.1)

- **Questions**

Students need to learn to ask questions to develop thinking strategies, social problem solving and planning. Like other areas of language it needs to be deliberately developed. Playing fun games like 'Celebrity Heads' helps to do this. To curb the enthusiasm of some more vocal children and encourage others, distribution of cardboard question marks with either who, what, when, where, why and how has been a useful addition to speaking lessons. (English Syllabus Op 1.1, 2.1; Cr.3.1, 4.1)

- **Discussing and reasoning**

The function of a discussion is to present information about an issue. Edward De Bono's 'Six Thinking Hats for Schools' may help practice different ways of thinking and provide the structure children may need when they 'can't think of anything'. (English Syllabus Cr 1.1, 2.1, 3.1 4.1; Op 3.1, 4.1; Cu3.1, 4.1)

- **Language Interactions**

Children need to understand that variations of volume can be used to enhance characterisation and construct negative views in spoken texts . They also need to recognise and interpret gestures, facial expression and body movement in spoken or multi-modal texts that construct positive or negative representation of people, places, events and/or things (English Syllabus Cr 1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 4.1)
(from 'Time for Talking' by Love and Reilly)

Judith concluded her talk with these important messages:

- Oral language is relevant to **all ages**.
- Oral language is crucial to the development of the other strands of Reading & Viewing and Writing & Shaping.
- Oral language can be incorporated into all aspects of the curriculum.

Further reading:

English Syllabus available from the QSA site [qsa@ qld.gov.au](mailto:qsa@qld.gov.au)

Love, E & Reilly, S. 1997, *Time for Talking: Speaking and listening activities for lower primary students*, Pearson Education Australia Pty Ltd.

(Australia available through EDSCO, Dominie and general booksellers.)

Oral Language: Developmental Continuum and Resource Book, part of the First Steps series Rigby Heinemann.

(Please note that the *First Steps* is being revamped and rewritten. An assessment and reporting book is now available.)

See also: Hot Topic: Speaking and listening listed under the Curriculum Exchange, Educational Queensland.

Stephen Mysliwy.

SUPPORT PERSONNEL AS LEADERS OF CURRICULUM INNOVATION

Michelle Aniftos



Michelle is a psychologist and educator with an extensive work history in all sectors: early childhood, primary, secondary, special education and tertiary education. She is currently pursuing a doctorate in health psychology. Her research aims to define organisational factors that promote the health and well-being of educators.

Michelle encourages support personnel and classroom teachers to reflect on their own practices, and to critically analyse curriculum and outcomes, with the aim of developing independent thinking and problem solving in our students.

Education is pivotal to success as an active and informed citizen, enabling successful participation in society. As educators, we hold the key for students - the learning experiences we provide are pivotal in shaping lifelong outcomes for the young people we work with. Michelle advocates the need to explore more innovative ways to create change, valuing academic and social outcomes for students. We need to be agents of change and advocate for our students/clients. We need to participate in the development of statements, which will inform our practices. As educators, we should have input into school processes and practices, e.g., Annual Operational Plans and Budgets, curriculum frameworks, school procedures, support structures, e.g. appraisal, ascertainment.

Facilities and amenities need to be designed and managed to promote inclusive practices, not only within the classroom, but within the broader school environment, e.g., play areas, sports. Ensure a collaborative process is in place for all stakeholders, e.g., staff, parents, students, support personnel, etc.

Collaboration for inclusive education should consider

- collaborative culture (our challenges)
- shared leadership (our responsibility)
- coherent vision (our goals)
- comprehensive planning
- adequate resources
- sustained implementation, and
- continuous evaluation for improvement (make informed, proactive decisions).

Inclusive practices include:

- individual learning profile (formal and informal data)
- consultative processes
- accommodations / assistance
- instructional design / strategies (IEP, ISP)
- diagnostic teaching and intervention
- life skills priorities
- specialist supports.

Bridges to Inclusion:

- *Knowledge* of ourselves and our pedagogy, learners and their learning styles, effective teaching and learning practices.
- *Skills* for communication and collaboration, learning management
- *Processes* of problem identification and resolution
- *Attitudes* - respect, optimism, trust, intentionality (Purkey and Schmidt).

EQ: Principles of Inclusive Curriculum CS-15

- Curriculum is inclusive when participants in learning
 - identify and address barriers that limit students' opportunities, participation and benefits from schooling;
 - include value, and use as a basis for learning, the perspectives, contributions and experiences of the full range of social and cultural groups, by acknowledging diversity both within and among these groups;
 - develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and processes necessary to
 - i. question how disadvantage has developed and exists within social structures
 - ii. challenge rather than accept social injustice;
 - iii. empower people to participate as equals.

As committed educators, we need to lead curriculum innovations and reform. It is essential to enable *all* learners to benefit from schooling so that society itself will benefit. As significant number of our students do not have the skills or confidence to succeed at school and soon become disconnected from formal learning. Personnel seeking to improve outcomes need to review and improve accountability towards social justice in all domains of teaching and learning - philosophies and policies; processes and practices; programs and pedagogies; and people and places.

Further readings:

- Walther-Thomas et al (2000). *Collaboration for Inclusive Education*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Friend, M. & W. Bursuck (2000). *Including Students with Special Needs*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Purkey, W. W. & Schmidt, J.J. (1990). *Invitational Learning for Counselling and Development*. Greensboro NC: ERIC Clearinghouse.
- Ashman & Elkins eds. (2000). *Educating Children with Diverse Abilities*. Sydney. Prentice-Hall.

Mary Lancaster (ST:LD)

COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIC READING (CSR)



Joy Seary began her teaching career in North Queensland after completing her primary teaching training at the Townsville Teachers' College in 1973. After three years of teaching she returned to James Cook University to complete her Bachelor of Education degree. The next few years were busy with marriage, children and several more teaching appointments around North Queensland. Eventually circumstances saw the Seary family living in Brisbane where Joy continued to pursue an interest in learning disabilities and learning difficulties. She now works as a Support Teacher, Learning Difficulties at Aspley East State School.

Joy has explored this strategy which appears to benefit students across the board. It has been thoroughly researched by Dr Sharon Vaughn and her colleagues, originally at the University of Miami and later at the University of Texas (Austin). Vaughn presented this strategy to her RSTAQ audience in 1997. Joy took up the challenge of fully investigating its use and it has now become part and parcel of her practice as a highly significant and beneficial inclusive strategy that classroom teachers can employ with relative ease. She has taken the opportunity to pass on its benefits to many groups. Below is a brief summary of its features.

Rationale: CSR is an example of a peer-mediated, inclusive strategy that provides a group structure within which students can be cognitive coaches for one another; it can be used effectively across grade levels.

Purpose:

- (a) To enhance the reading comprehension abilities of students with varying abilities
- (b) To teach a four comprehension strategies thoroughly so that they can be blended into a single overall process
 - Previewing and predicting – **PREVIEW**
 - Monitoring for understanding and vocabulary knowledge – **CLICK and CLUNK**
 - Main idea – **GET THE GIST**
 - Self-questioning of passage understanding – **WRAP UP**

Materials Required:

Expository texts, Role cards with descriptions, Clunk cards, CSR learning log format,

Process:

The teacher:

- Describes the strategy
- Models each aspect
- Role plays the implementation of the strategy
- Gets students to apply the strategy several times a week for two or three weeks depending upon the level of students

Groups:

- Groups are heterogeneous (i.e., they consist of students with varying reading abilities)
- Students have defined roles and need to know how to implement the roles (e.g., Leader,

Clunk Expert, Gist Expert, Announcer)

- Groups have academic and social roles

Other strategies learned that could be generalized across the curriculum:

- Learning a process for ‘debugging’ difficult texts
- Learning to generate questions that tap various levels of comprehension, for example to ask \$10, \$20, \$30, \$40 questions
- Providing supportive feedback to group members.

Connection to other areas of the curriculum:

- Assists in the promotion of substantive conversations and in the development of a metalanguage that supports the comprehending process; can also assist in catering for ‘Diversity’.
- Once learnt could be embedded in ‘across disciplines’ in units of work.

Further information about this strategy can be obtained by obtaining articles through the EBSCO database found under the Professional Exchange, Education Queensland.

Two of the ‘props’ that can be used as part of this strategy can be found under TIPS in this issue of ‘Perspectives’.

Michael Boyle

CAN WE FIX IT? YES WE CAN!

Bob the Builder looks at Cooperative Learning.



Cheryl Billsborough has gained a wealth of experience working in a range of roles within Education Queensland – class teacher, Support Teacher: Learning Difficulties, Reading Recovery Teacher, Deputy Principal, Advisory Visiting Teacher. Her work at Rangeville State School won the school a National Literacy Award in 1999. She currently is the district AVT for ST:LDs. Cheryl’s passion is linked to helping develop practices and understandings of teaching strategies that engage students quickly, actively, accountably, creatively, equally and efficiently for better student outcomes. Knowing the strategies (daily work tools) is not enough. The principles (guiding laws/rules) and paradigms (the big concepts) that underpin the strategies must also be understood. These strategies can be used as a part of almost any lesson. Without special planning or changes to the curriculum.

Cheryl Billsborough, in typically dynamic fashion presented on collaborative learning to a packed room at the RSTAQ/ USQ conference. She has built a successful teacher training package out of the idea of ‘*sharing secret teacher business*’. Using research based on Spencer Kagan’s work she went on to assert that cooperative learning based on the PIES principles (positive interdependence, individual accountability, equal participation, simultaneous responding), be part of every effective classroom program.

She suggested we don't teach cooperative learning lessons as such but instead, make cooperative learning part of every lesson through the use of simple generic structures (e.g. pairs share, shoulder partners, inside-outside circle). Educational research (See : Spencer Kagan) shows how Cooperative Learning rather than Direct Instruction narrows the progressive achievement gap between high and low performing students in schools.

Thanks goodness for that! I understand the power of scripted programs and I know they have their place but they don't resonate in my soul as much as these strategies that train the students to help each other. Teaching someone else increases exponentially the likelihood that we will learn it well ourselves.

Cheryl took an experiential approach. She demonstrated and we practised the structure 'Rally Coach' – a method of students helping students with maths.

Unfortunately time constraints prevented Cheryl from sharing all she wanted. But I am sure if you want more details you can contact her through RSTAQ or Education Queensland's Toowoomba District Office.

Cooperative Learning is not group work. In fact these two strategies sit at opposite ends of the continuum. Those of you who have tried various forms of cooperative learning, group work or peer tutoring and know its power and efficacy will join Cheryl in spreading the word.

Can we fix it? Yes we can!

References:

Hot Topic: **Cooperative learning**

http://education.qld.gov.au/tal/tips/hot_topics/01592.htm

(Available through the Curriculum Exchange, Education Queensland.)

See also:

Cooperative Learning Centre - University of Minnesota

<http://www.cooplearn.org/>

Cooperative learning: Table of contents - University of Northern Iowa

<http://fp.uni.edu/rac/col/table.htm>

Roger and David Johnson from the Cooperative Learning Centre at the University of Minnesota have produced a great legacy of work that has been highly influential in developing the sophisticated application of cooperative learning. Some of their texts are available through this table of contents.

Kagan, S. 1994, *Cooperative learning*, San Juan Capistrano, California, Kagan Cooperative Learning. (LP - US)

(Available through the Professional Collection, Education Queensland.)

David Waterworth (ST: LD)

ENGAGING STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM

Dr Don Rice

➤ *Associate Professor Don Rice currently teaches and researches in learning disabilities at the University of Southern Queensland. His particular interests are in learning problems associated with self-regulation of attention in conditions such as ADHD. He strongly believes in the importance of research based practices in education and has given many presentations which integrate current research findings with sound teaching practices for regular and special educators.*

Rice argued that the training of teachers in their practice needs be based on evidence emanating from scientific research. Currently, he suggests many practices are bound by

- Tradition – ‘That’s the way we’ve always done.’
- Unfounded beliefs – (superstition), for example breathing deeply, teaching to say ‘no’;
- Anecdotes – these may be entertaining or interesting but provide no basis for generalization.

He drew an analogy with the medical profession whose practice is expected to be based on scientific research. While it is difficult to achieve ‘gold standard’ research based on true randomisation, it is the ideal. He cited the case of the Ritalin trial where the random allocation was not achieved. One major difficulty to pursuing ‘gold standard’ research’ is the high cost.

Important questions cannot always be measured (quantitative research). Qualitative research is very useful particularly early in research to identify variables for further research (e.g., experience of immigration children entering the classroom). Issues to do with school renewal might be highlighted through qualitative data.

He poses the questions:

‘If our practice is not evidence based are we doing the best for our students?’

‘Have we the right to use unproven methods?’

There is the need to train teachers to become critical consumers of research. He suggests that there are not a lot of people who apply research into practice. An example of one who has is Marie Clay spending a lot of time teaching how to translate research. Rice likes the idea of the scientific practitioners model, which teachers would need to be trained in to be involved in scientific inquiry. This involves a sceptical stance (not cynical). Since we expect doctors to have a theory and a research to come up with recommendations, he suggests it is reasonable for teachers, similarly involved in helping students with disabilities to work from a research basis.

Example of approaches that have been adopted in a fairly uncritical fashion at various times include:

1. Coloured lenses – Helen Irlen (1983 article); from a scientific point of view there are lots of questions about it
2. Patterning – Doman, Delacato; developmental stages correspond with evolutionary stages

influenced the use of patterning to attempt to train handicapped children – difficulties replicating research American Academy of Paediatrics (1982) refuted its validity

3. Facilitated communication – some very handicapped children were assisted to write through facilitation
4. Sensory, integrative theory/educational kinesiology
5. Mega-vitamin theory.

What are some warning signs about some questionable techniques?

1. Results for the method are not published in a refereed journal; look out for extravagant claims and beware of accepting a method that has the potential to harm.
2. Always be sceptical of those who have the advantage of gaining financially.
3. Note the lack of transparent logic between problem and intervention, for example in case of ADHD which relates to a biochemical imbalance ‘cures’ need to be related to problem
4. Proponents make certain claims
 - a. education system trying to prevent them using their system
 - b. current research methods don’t allow for valid research for this and only their people can carry out the research
 - c. mystify through the use of new terms.

Some good practices supported by research include:

1. Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and scaffolded instruction
2. Reciprocal teaching (Brown and Campione)
3. Cognitive psychology (Resnick and Wittrock) – active learning
4. Peer tutoring (Cross age tutoring)

DISCOVERY AND REMEDIATION THROUGH CONTEXTS



John Davidson trained as a maths/science teacher and spent 14 years in this profession in country high school in southern Queensland. The birth of a disabled son in the mid eighties was the stimulus for a return to study in the field of special education with a focus on severe and profound disability. John then worked in a special school with children with a range of disabilities for several years where he gained a new understanding how of how children learn. A return to mainstream maths/science in the nineties combined with a revised understanding of learning theory has resulted in the development of a set of contextualized activity based learning modules.

John Davidson presented on ‘Discovery and Remediation through Contexts’. John teaches at Toowoomba State High School – (Wilsonton Campus up to year 10) in the Agriculture Field Study section. He has developed modules for teaching Mathematics underpinned by the following two principles:

- Integration in a traditional sense in terms of melding together mathematics, science, literacy and basic learning theory, and
- Contextualisation in terms of linking the student to a functional life driven activity based process.

All activities are selected, designed and driven by compliance with the following criteria:

- A clear and direct industrial, agricultural, commercial or recreational application;
- An activity based multi sensory learning process;
- A degree of repetitive but meaningful motor activity;
- A graded intellectual rigor so that different ability levels can drop out at any point;
- Natural consequences of a set of sequenced outcomes;
- The activity has 'global / societal/ group' outcomes that is 'bigger' than the individual student.

All modules have their own activity goals and outcomes across work skills, language, Maths and Science. John has developed modules called

- What's in a metre?
- To seed or not to seed
- Weighing cattle
- Comparing the taste of grain fed and grass fed meat
- Hay hey hay
- Maths in the garden
- Work in progress 'Perfect Proportion and Natural Distortion'.

For further information about any of the above information please contact John at the Wilsonton Campus – Toowoomba SHS.

Helen Little (Support Teacher)

STRESS FREE TEACHING STRATEGIES

It is my belief that the greatest resource in the classroom is the students themselves. So in my teaching I look for ways where they can help each other. Initially this was just the use of 'Peer Tutoring' in reading – where students sit together in pairs and support each other with 'Pause Prompt and Praise'.

However, I have discovered that this idea can be spread to all subject areas. At the recent 'Diversity is the Norm' conference I presented ideas that could be used in classrooms to cut the load of teacher preparation, decrease behaviour management problems by engaging every student in the classroom and capitalise on the concept of students as teachers.

Many of us find ourselves in the position of facilitating professional growth. It isn't just the students who benefit from these stress free strategies – so do the teachers.

Recently I worked with a group of high school teachers. I was warned that they may not like new

ideas and could be apathetic. Nothing could have been further from the truth. Rather than just talk about stress free strategies, we used them to explore our thinking and learn new information.

First we did a three step interview, discussing why we began teaching, why we were still teaching and what our pictures of teaching were. Next we did a corners exercise around the statement – ‘All students should be quiet in the classroom most of the time.’ Now that really provoked some discussion.

In the middle session we did a Jigsaw looking at five different stress free strategies. First the expert groups read and discussed graphic organisers, reciprocal questioning, reconstruction ‘baggies’, cloze and read and retell. These were presented as alternatives to a board full of notes. Next the participants were regrouped to explain their strategy and discuss which subject areas they could use it in.

The energy in the room was palpable as these teachers took the ideas past the limits I had set.

So, once you have tried these ideas for yourself, share them with your peers and help reduce their work overload.

For more information on these strategies, see:

- Cloze - <http://education.qld.gov.au/tal/tips/>
- Three level guides - First Steps Reading - WA Ed. Dept
- Graphic Organizers - www.myread.org
- Reciprocal Questioning - Whole Language Strategies for Secondary Students - D. Watson

Copies of the Stress Free Teaching Strategies Power point presentation are available free of charge from:
david.waterworth@qed.qld.gov.au

David Waterworth



A PLAN FOR STRATEGIC READING

PRIOR TO READING:

1. Preview

a. Brainstorm

What do we already know about the topic?

b. Predict

What do we think we will find about the topic when we read the passage?

R E A D (the first paragraph or section)

DURING READING:

2. Click and Clunk

a. Were there any parts that were hard to understand (clunks)?

b. How can we fix the clunks?

3. Get the Gist

a. What is the most important who or what?

b. What is the most important idea about the who or what?

R E A D

Do steps 2 and 3 again, with all the paragraphs or sections in the passage.

AFTER READING

4. Wrap up

a. Ask questions:

What questions would show we understand the most important information?

b. Review:

What did we learn?

Source: Joy Seary, on behalf of RSTAQ.

REMEDIAL AND SUPPORT TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND
PO Box 62, Grange 4051

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Please indicate work sector:

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

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QUALIFICATIONS

Qualification	Institution	Date completed

TEACHING EXPERIENCE: Up to 5 years 5-10 years 10 years or more
(Briefly state when and in which area of Education)

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Signature of applicant:	Date: / /
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NB PLEASE ATTACH

1. Payment of \$62.00 (\$50.00 annual subscription plus \$12.00 for processing of application).
2. Photocopy of Board of Teacher Registration receipt (to confirm status and qualifications), or photocopies as evidence of qualification, and contact details for 2 referees, e.g., current members of this Association, contact at the tertiary institution where qualifications were obtained, or a current Education Qld employee.

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