



Perspectives

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'... the most important contribution which the school can make to the realization of the ideal of the educative society is the practical education of its members in the meaning of community. The school can do nothing better for the education of citizens than to make its boys and girls members of a true community in which are combined liberty and order, freedom and responsibility; in which human personality is respected for its own sake, regardless of age or other irrelevant circumstance; which recognizes the authority of reason and experience, not of fear and status; and where liberty of thought has its complement in the responsibility for making one's own choice of opinions, and love rather than neutrality is the guarantee of intellectual freedom.'

'The Aims of Education (Glaucon)' by MVC Jeffreys, 1972, p.85.

Schools are increasingly expected to bear the brunt of social change. There has never been more pressure, or so it seems, on schools to construct environments and provide programs where issues such as racism, youth suicide, meeting the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds, addressing issues pertaining to gender, providing for students with a variety of disabilities are but a few items on the menu requiring urgent attention. Communities of educators, quite naturally, may feel overwhelmed by the onus to respond to this social and academic complexity.

Special educators, in particular are at the front line in addressing the issues of social justice and equity. But these principles may be perceived as quaint or eccentric and not really where the main game is. After all, in 2004 it is the winner who takes all. At least that is the message of reality shows, a phenomenon that has allure for millions of teenagers weekly; similarly other media may communicate a message of instant gratification, the survival of the fittest and other values that are not consonant with schools communities committed to the enhancement of all its members as individuals and as a collective.

Schools understandably frequently move into the mindset of 'business as usual', putting on the blinkers and coping with the avalanche of change by ignoring it as much as possible. Another response seems to be to repair the damage wherever possible by offering glib, simplistic solutions. Recently, for example it has been suggested that redressing the gender imbalance of male to female teachers in our schools could contribute to the social and academic health of our student population. Simplistic perhaps, but it is one solution that has received wide approval from politicians and the media. The issue, 'What about the boys' is illustrative, however of the need for school communities to engage in complex discourses that embrace various and sometimes competing paradigms. The notes concerning the education of boys provided in this issue provide some grist to the mill for those wishing to examine gender issues.

Another potentially rich and productive process for building communities that embrace diversity is to examine collaborative processes across a school body to discern how responsibility for all its students, including the very hard to teach, can be shared. It seems that only through collective ownership can true progress be made in catering for its exceptional students. It is still too common, unfortunately, for students with learning difficulties to be perceived as the responsibility of a small group of teachers and paraprofessionals, with the consequence that the issues of social justice and equity are marginalized. This process of relegating key principles to an ideological cul-de-sac enables 'real' business to be resumed as usual. Of course, collective responsibility must as well be realized in pedagogical practices that harvest the complementary strengths of teachers.

Co-teaching is one approach that has been used for many years, but more recently has been perceived as an important plank in effecting inclusive practice. This major strategy has the potential to promote communities intent on drawing together, to provide models of operation for teachers wishing to combine their

efforts, strengths and skills, and to expand the number of feasible interventions that promote greater flexibility.

The realization of cohesive, reflective school communities mindful of difference is a long-term goal, requiring inspired leadership, comprehensive planning, good will and endurance. But surely the journey to achieve a community that applauds its diversity is one that accrues immense satisfaction for its members. An idealistic sentiment perhaps! But surely it is one worth striving for. After all the social values of tolerance, equity, etc are the oil that can ensure a healthy Australian society where all citizens are given a 'fair go' in the 21st century.

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People ask me, why should I join RSTAQ?

I usually answer that RSTAQ provides professional development and advocacy for those working with children experiencing Learning Difficulties. Our recent conference in Toowoomba is an example of our commitment to the provision of quality PD. More about that next issue.

Today I would like to highlight the role of RSTAQ as an advocate. Over the past two weeks we have been asked to participate in discussions about the new senior certificate, and to represent you on the steering committee of the Interventions in Literacy and Numeracy (INLAN) Project.

INLAN 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 in Queensland. The researchers are asking questions like: Should Reading Recovery, Support Teacher - Learning Difficulties, and Intervention Aide support continue as major intervention support? How useful/ necessary is appraisalment?

RSTAQ will be there to represent your views as this research project unfolds.

The QSA is running a public consultation process to discuss the need for a new senior certificate that will meet the needs of all students completing twelve years of schooling. As part of this discussion they are flagging the idea of a minimum benchmark in Literacy and Numeracy. The voices of those who work most

closely with these students need to be heard in this debate. RSTAQ is proud to be involved. For more information:
<http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/etrf/seniorcertificate/paper.html>. Note especially page 17.

During the holidays I met with Anna Brazier, Assistant Director Inclusive Curriculum. I found her to be a teacher with a passion for students' learning. The following issues were raised:

- The absence of comment about students experiencing Learning Difficulties in the government response to the Report of the Ministerial Taskforce in Inclusive Education, despite the fact that a subcommittee was set up specifically to discuss these issues and make recommendations. These reports are available at:
<http://education.qld.gov.au/students/disabilities/adjustment/>
- The need for ongoing support for personnel in High Schools to access and use the on line resource for supporting students; and to improve processes for support as per CS -13.
- The fact that confusion still exists amongst principals between Appraisalment and Ascertainment.
- That the time will come when the Appraisalment tasks need to be rewritten to take into account EQ's Systemic Reform Initiatives: multi media applications, four resource model, outcomes based education, new maths and English syllabus.

We had a most productive discussion on your behalf and it is my hope that it will continue.

So why join and remain with the Remedial and Support Teachers' Association? Because we represent you. At each major change, we are invited to participate and speak on your behalf. We will keep you informed as to what is happening. Make it a two way street, contact RSTAQ and give your opinions. Let your voice be heard.

BOLDLY GOING WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD

By Karen D. Howells, MEd.

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The stresses of meeting the educational needs of an increasingly diverse population of students has inspired some successful and some rather unsuccessful collaborations. In this article, a special education teacher who started a much needed collaboration program at a midsized parochial school in a suburb of a southern city reflects on her experiences, discussing several different types of service delivery models as well as some of the problems she encountered with each.

As the classroom becomes a more complex place in which to teach, requiring a vast repertoire of knowledge, strategies, and energy, educators have reached toward one another for help. Solutions to stress have been sought by almost everyone in the field of education. As these persons have come together to meet the disparate challenges of educating the youth of our nation, they have deemed this effort “collaboration.” But all collaborations are not created equal. For some teachers, collaboration is forced upon them and viewed as yet another burden on teaching. For others, collaboration comes just in time to rescue a teacher that is “going under” from the endless details of planning, teaching, and professional development. For special educators, collaboration can be both at the same time.

My own view of collaboration in education has always been akin to healthy family collaborations, where no one has power over another but all contribute to the cause, and give and take occurs. Each member is valued, is knowledgeable, and has an impact on or voice in what occurs. What follows are my experiences with collaboration as a special educator and the lessons learned from it.

A BUMPY RIDE

Four years ago, I had a unique experience in that I began the year as the sole special education resource teacher in a midsized parochial school in a suburb of a southern city. Before obtaining my teaching credential in special education, I had taught preschool and art in that same parochial school, and I was hired on a part-time basis in special education. I served a total of 17 students from Grades 1 to 8 who had been identified as having various disabilities, including traumatic brain injury, mild mental retardation, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, behavior problems, and learning disabilities (LD).

The principal, though possessing 2 decades of administrative experience, had never had special education services in any of the schools in which he had served as principal. He was willing to have me provide the services, but admitted that I would be on my own. His only request was that I provide a report to the school board now and then.

It was fortunate that I had an existing relationship with most of the teaching faculty. The number of students and the time required to provide services far exceeded the available time per day, which probably would not surprise most special educators. I realized that to provide 17 students in eight different classrooms with services in 16 hours per week, I would have to invent a way to be in more than one place at a time. I tried to deny the reality that I would more than likely not be able to meet all of the needs of the students, families, and teachers all of the time.

DISPARATE POINTS OF VIEW

My initial “collaborations” took on the characteristics of a firefighter running between three separate fires. I determined that more student pull-out was going to be necessary due to time constraints and unfamiliarity of teachers with inclusionary practices.

The first-grade teacher had taught for 27 years and viewed special education services as extra help for the students. She preferred that I remove the two students from her classroom at designated times, which turned out to be two times a week for 90 minutes each time. She professed confidence in my abilities to determine what needed to be done with the students. I provided her with biweekly reports and consulted with her before report cards were distributed. Other than that, she used me primarily as a sounding board for dealing with the parents, and I often fielded telephone calls from them. Somehow, with limited time to talk, the first-grade teacher and I experienced the least conflict in our efforts and yielded the greatest academic results for the students. From her comments, I deduced that she felt that the methods of the special educator were different from her own and somewhat mysterious. Her primary goal was to see results in the academic achievement of her students, and indeed she did. At the beginning of the school year, neither student could identify more than a few letters of the alphabet, with or without picture cues, and neither knew any of the individual or combined sounds of letters. One of the children could identify, by sight, his name and the words *more* and *stop* with regularity. The other student’s attempts at reading indicated a complete lack of knowledge of any sight words from Dolch and Thorndike word lists.

Within 5 months, these students were reading on grade level as measured by a standardized achievement test, although one of the students continued to have significant behavior problems in the classroom. The teacher was convinced that the student would be a candidate for retention on the basis of his inability to sit still and concentrate in the first-grade classroom, although it was obvious that with support he could achieve. At year end, it was determined that he could go on to the second grade—much to the consternation of the second-grade teacher and to the joy of the first-grade teacher. Perhaps because of the academic successes of the students, this was my most pleasant collaborative experience, although I considered it the least collaborative in the sense that essentially we were implementing two different programs, and I was not involved in the activities going on with these students within the general education classroom.

PULLING TEETH FROM A CHICKEN

My collaborations with the third-, fourth-, and seventh grade teachers were by far the closest to collaboration as I view it, because I remained in the general classroom 90% of the time while providing services to the students. In the cases of behavior problems, I was asked to provide a plan for students and teachers to follow. Also, the teachers and I spent regularly scheduled time discussing the progress of the students and what was working and what was not. Unfortunately, several components were missing from these collaborations, such as special educator input on content and alternate methods of presenting material within the classroom setting. As a result, these experiences

yielded lower measurable results for student academic achievement than I had hoped, but yielded the greatest improvement in student classroom behaviors as reflected in reduced number of detentions and reprimands.

I believe that greater student academic achievement could have been accomplished had I been able to spend more time with each student in the classroom, or if I had had more input on the content and delivery of lessons for the students. I did teach minilessons to individuals with special needs when I pulled them out of the classroom. In addition, I adapted tests for students and consulted with parents and attended parent/teacher conferences. However, these strategies alone did not prove entirely satisfactory.

The third-, fourth-, and seventh-grade teachers reflected no more understanding of the methods of special education than did the first-grade teacher, but they did demonstrate a small but honest desire to learn them. All of these teachers asked for whole-class demonstrations of adaptations of lessons and tests. The third-grade teacher even incorporated my adaptations into her teaching because she was experiencing a new math program and was feeling very inadequate about it. She asked me to explain the significance of many aspects of the program, so each week I translated, summarized, and applied the information in the teacher's manual to what she would be doing in the classroom. In addition, she asked me to teach some of the lessons so she could see them being done. In essence, she was suggesting that somehow a special educator has a bit more insight to the inner workings of content as well as methodology. I found that intriguing.

I had the least impact with these teachers in the area of content. These teachers felt that I should not offer any different content from what they were providing; watering theirs down was fine, but nothing different or additional should be included. When the grades of students continued to slip, the teachers did not question their content or methods, but instead questioned my methods. They felt, somehow, that I should have been able to get the kids to succeed. I addressed the inappropriateness of some of the content, but I was told that it was in the textbook, and the textbook was sacrosanct. This attitude was a severe limitation to our collaborative relationship.

FEAST TO FAMINE

My experiences with the fifth-, sixth-, and eighth-grade teachers ranged from "hang loose" to bizarre. When I broached the subject of coming into the classroom of the eighth-grade teacher to provide services for some of his students, he said, "Sure! Do what you want, whenever you want, but don't do it during recess!" I managed to avoid conflicts with recess all year, but when I entered the classroom door, I was expected to teach all the students. I agreed to teach a unit on study skills, which I did using the science and math lessons in the textbooks and a few additional ideas of my own. In addition, to support some of the students, I ended up doing a multigrade pull-out program for language arts and a one-on-one pull-out for math. The seventh- and eighth-grade teachers ended up giving me the responsibility for spelling grades for their students, but the sixth-grade teacher determined that her students would have to do the textbook spelling tests in her classroom in addition to the work in the pull-out program.

My experience with the sixth-grade teacher was revealing. This teacher articulated an attitude that all of the faculty members seemed to possess to varying degrees, but that no one else was willing to express openly. This teacher blatantly said, "If those kids can't cut it the way we do it, then they don't belong here!" She felt that students with special needs should be in special schools. She was

vehement in her dislike of having students with special needs in her classroom, and having another teacher in her room was difficult for her. She was willing to have the students pulled out, but they were still responsible for whatever happened in the classroom while they were gone. She gave strict orders for no one to reveal to the pulled-out students what had transpired in their absence unless they came to her and asked, "once and only once." As a result, I attempted providing services within the classroom but was always relegated to examining the latest problem with the computers. This teacher was ingenious in finding ways to avoid collaboration.

I had known the fifth-grade teacher for 10 years, and he did not hesitate to tell me that his goal was to get through the textbooks whether the kids got it or not. Of course, those words are like a bolt of lightning to a special educator, and I took a deep breath as I bit my tongue each time I crossed the threshold of the fifth-grade classroom. The teacher was always verbally kind to me, but he kept his plans secret for each day. My time in his classroom became akin to the work of a translator at the United Nations. As he spoke, I would draw pictures, underline, circle, and explain the way through lessons for the students I served in his class.

FROM THE TOP DOWN

As I began collaborating with the teachers, it became obvious to me that I could not necessarily count on the principal as an advocate in this process. Early one morning, I was walking down the long hallway to the sixth grade classroom when I heard a booming voice. "Mrs. Howells! Mrs. Howells! What is this??!" I turned to see the red-faced, bulging-eyed principal shaking a piece of paper in his fist. I walked up to him and saw that the paper he was holding was the latest Individualized Education Program (IEP) from one of the sixth-grade students. Although he had been in attendance at the eligibility determination and planning meeting, and although he had signed his name to the IEP, that particular morning he decided, "I don't like this! I don't want to do this!"

His wrath was directed toward a line in the IEP that allowed the student to use a laptop computer for assignments. He said it would cause tremendous problems for the teacher because the student did not have a printer and could not turn in any of his work. I replied that if the student put it on a disk, the teacher could check the work on her computer. "No!" answered the principal. "That is too much work! Unless the student can print out the assignments, I will not allow the computer to be used." After I briefly went over the laws and responsibilities surrounding IEPs, the principal roared off in a huff. Clearly, the reality of what a special education program meant in his school had finally hit him full force. He was not happy.

LESSONS LEARNED

My retelling of my experiences would be no more valuable to the field of education than old war stories if it were not for the fact that my situation is not unique. Certainly, some of the circumstances will vary from one school to another, but many of the basic elements remain the same. Hence, I offer a few helpful suggestions from my collaboration experiences.

- **Lesson 1.** Do not assume anything. Expect the process of learning collaboration to be difficult and slow. Do not expect a person to know how to collaborate even though that person might indicate a desire to do so.
- **Lesson 2.** Be realistic and stay focused. Keeping my schedule flexible in order to accommodate field trips, assemblies, religious activities, and special events was necessary, although it resulted in the appearance that I could accommodate anything that occurred. This was far from the case.

Further, our school's boon in technology turned out to be a bane for my schedule, because I was one of only two persons who knew how to operate the equipment. That made me the problem solver for any problems, computer crisis, installation, or lock up. It soon became obvious to me that I could not be everywhere and do everything for everybody. I had to be realistic and keep focused on my priorities.

- **Lesson 3.** Be patient with your colleagues. When the teachers and administration first balked at efforts toward collaboration, I began to suspect that these educators simply did not want to deal with students with special needs, but I realized that there was really something else at the heart of this reaction. Never, in the history of the school, had another educator entered their domain. Never had they shared responsibility with anyone else. I realized that, though it could not be denied that there was an underlying bias against special education, it was the collaboration that was the most threatening to them. They did not want to have to check or agree with anyone else about the welfare of their students, appropriateness of content, methods used, or anything else that would cause them to have to change their behaviors. Their attitudes were not necessarily malicious; theirs was a typical response to change.
- **Lesson 4.** A failure to collaborate doesn't mean that collaboration is bad. As noted, collaboration is a learning process for all involved. Some collaboration is better than none. It may not be perfect, but accept it as a start. Remember, you have to hang in there and work at it.

CONCLUSION

Collaboration is a process that requires continued intervention and revision, tenacity, and dedication, and most of all—time. Even at that, collaboration is far from perfect. So why do we do it? What are the benefits of collaboration? We do it because together, through collaboration, we can solve problems that alone, we cannot solve. Through collaboration, we can improve situations that alone, we cannot improve. Through collaboration, we can better meet the challenges that lie before us in meeting the needs of all learners. As educators, we have willingly taken on the task of making an impact on the present and the future. We often pride ourselves on the fact that we can make a difference in the lives of individual students, as well as in society as a whole. Through collaboration, we can provide support for ourselves, and set an example for our students. We demonstrate, by example, that each of us is unique but important, and together we are much greater than the sum of us all.

Permission to reproduce the above article '*Boldly going where angels fear to tread*' by was sought and obtained from PRO-ED. The original article was published in *Intervention in School & Clinic*, Jan 2000, Vol. 35 Issue 3, p157.

Collaborative practice: Not for the faint-hearted

I am going to be co-teaching reading with a regular ed teacher next year and I am clueless with what to do. Does anyone do inclusion? What materials do you use? I will also have the included students for an additional period to provide support and remediation (I teach middle school)...HELP! (LD online forum Feb 2003)

I have been co-teaching this year with teachers in both 5th and 6th grades. The 6th grade class especially has gone well. The teacher is committed to it, and, most importantly in my opinion, our co-teaching model works well for the sped. kids in that class. We have used a variety of models during this year. Sometimes there is two of us presenting the lesson to the whole class, sometimes we break into groups, sometimes one of us does the lesson while the other “wanders”. We have used the same materials and different materials with the groups. I started out the year using Wilson with a group of students (reg. ed. and sped.) once to twice a week, and doing novel reading the other days. That tapered off as the year went on and we really got into what we were doing. I do continue to provide a separate list of spelling words for four students. However, other than Wilson I have never used separate materials; the kids have all read the same novels and we have used the same writing lessons for everyone. Like I said earlier, the sped. kids in this class are able to keep up with the whole class for the most part. I have modified some homework and long-term projects, but many of the modifications have been done with the whole class (specific outlines and due dates for long term projects), or with a mixed group of reg. ed. and sped. kids (reading a novel at a slower pace than the other groups and spending more discussion time on comprehension.) In my opinion it's important that the ability of the sped. kids be such that they can work with the class without you having to provide a separate program under the guise of co-teaching. For example, I do much more pull-out in the 5th grade class, because one of the students in there is reading 2-3 years below everyone else and needs the 1-1 reading support.

I hope this makes sense; don't know if it will help or not. Co-teaching can be wonderful as long as both teachers are equally invested in it; in the long run that's more important than the materials or the students. Based on personal experience, finding time to plan, discuss students, and just communicate your individual expectations, thoughts, etc. is key. If you do that, you'll truly be a team working together for the good of ALL the students. If not, you'll basically be two warm bodies in the same room at the same time, hoping to accomplish something.

Good luck!

Jenn

LD Online Feb2003

This online discussion identifies some of the pertinent issues that need addressing when special educators and classroom teachers work collaboratively, and most particularly as co-teachers in a shared context. The collaborative model, in the estimation of some researchers leads to ‘valuing the contribution of both collaborative teachers, through equitable tasking and responsibility’ (Austin 2001). However, as the mentor teacher suggests, collaborative practice is no ‘easy street’ and involves thoughtful practice to the highest degree.

Going back to the 1970's the Department of Education Queensland, in particular Special Education conceptualised the role of resource teacher as a means of providing more flexible, responsive

interventions than were currently available through the withdrawal model, at that time the accepted model of provision for students with learning disabilities. The resource model was to be applied mainly in country areas where the hand of special education was tentatively outstretched. Admittedly, many of the recipient schools had received occasional visits from Guidance Officers but, from 1974, a 'body' was appointed to schools such as Richmond, Hughenden, Winton, Mt Isa who was to fulfil this pioneering role. The expectation was that these teachers would work collaboratively to a greater degree than had been the practice under the remedial model.

Most of those involved in the experiment would agree, I think, that efforts were mixed with most falling back on the known model. Still, there were attempts to work collaboratively, largely alliances of the willing, but at least these were explorations of what could be accomplished through teamwork between the classroom teacher and the resource teacher. Most importantly, these teams adhered to the commonsense view that classroom teaching and what happened in the resource room should have some coherence (i.e., if a student required an intensive phonic program this was reinforced and applied in the classroom). Attention was paid to who did what and where. There was no real understanding though of how these processes could be formalized. This awareness and practice is more recent and has been influenced by the need to promote inclusive practice.

It was during the 1990's when Support Teachers became generally aware that there were a number of models that might inform collaborative practices. RSTAQ, for example in 1997 had the benefit of input from Sharon Vaughn, then at the University of Miami, who provided a description of some of the models that might be enlisted in the service of collaborative practice. These are still worth sharing. In delineating models of co-teaching, Vaughn provided the following alternatives.

- A. One group, one teacher, one monitor
- B. Two groups, two teachers, same content
- C. Multiple groups, two teachers/monitors, content may vary
- D. Two groups, one re-teaches, one teaches alternative information
- E. One group, two teachers teaming

Friend and Cooke (1996) provide another categorization that overlaps with the above.

- One teacher, one supporting
- Station teaching
- Parallel teaching
- Alternative teaching
- Team teaching

Each of these approaches needs to be considered in the light of the context and purpose in which the collaboration is to occur. See their text for an appraisal of each.

Vaughn follows up with a co-teaching daily lesson plan which assists teachers to decide, amongst other things, which arrangement they will adopt at a certain point of time and development. (See TIPS for the 'Co-teaching daily lesson plans' format.) And I guess this is crucial. While the D alternative above, for example seems to have merit for many situations, this arrangement, if it were overused, might be perceived as providing for the 'Koala' and 'Kangaroo' groups. Rather, it would seem desirable to adopt different arrangements according to circumstances. These would acknowledge:

- the experience of teachers involved in co-teaching; too many groups could make management difficult so C might not be the first choice.

- the number of students requiring special support; B for example could be utilized so that information was taught in different ways.

One issue commonly cited (e.g., Friend & Cook 1996) is the concern that the special educator might be relegated to playing an ancillary role (See model A) reacting and responding to the main play, conducted by the classroom teacher. While Friend and Cook concede that occasionally there is a need for the special educator to observe, assess, and monitor the progress of students in the classroom context, the use of this approach as the norm, they argue, is a waste of professional expertise.

Why be involved in a co-teaching arrangement anyway? Is there a sound research base to this approach?

One substantial difficulty resides in measuring the effectiveness of this model. According to Murawski and Swanson (2001) who reviewed 89 articles, there were only six that met their criteria for inclusion in a meta-analysis. This paucity of data makes it impossible to make definitive judgements about the efficaciousness of co-teaching for providing a vehicle as part of inclusive practice. In spite of these limitations, it was found that co-teaching between general and special education professionals was a moderately effective procedure. The advice of the authors is that the results should not be generalized. Rather, they suggest that much research needs to be pursued examining co-teaching outcomes as a function of ‘grade, gender, length of study, or disability types’. Friend (2000) delineates some critical questions that need to be investigated. These are:

- *When is collaborating through co-teaching worth the effort?*
- *How much is enough?*
- *How much of this type of collaboration can a teacher be reasonably expected to do?*
- *What is the minimum amount of time needed to effectively plan for co-teaching?*

Another way of testing the waters is to look at the satisfaction of those involved in co-teaching arrangements. Austin (2001) surveyed 139 collaborative teachers engaged in this process. The majority of those surveyed believed co-teaching benefited the academic development of their students. The benefits cited were ‘the reduced student/teacher ratio, the benefit of another teacher’s expertise and viewpoint, the value of remedial strategies and review for all students, and the opportunity for the students without disabilities to gain some understanding of the learning difficulties experienced by many students with disabilities’.

In addition to the evidence cited above suggesting collaborative models can play a valuable part in the inclusion process, their adoption does as well make good sense intuitively and practically. In working within the framework of an inclusive learning model, it seems sensible to explore their benefits as conscientiously as possible. One major source for nuts and bolts information about the implementation of this model comes through the work of Marilyn Friend and Lynne Cook. (See in particular ‘Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals’ available through the Education Qld Professional Collection at AccessED, Coorparoo, Brisbane.) Here they attend to issues such as:

- Co-teaching approaches
- Staff development
- Caseloads and class sizes
- Caseload distribution
- Time for planning

- Instructional strategies that facilitate planning
- Scheduling and coordinating services
- Interpersonal problem solving
- Interpersonal communication
- Difficult interactions

This text could easily be the basis for several professional development sessions for cohorts of colleagues, particularly if potential partners are new to the model or collaboration is not progressing as well as it might. Indeed, Friend (2000) suggests that the skills need to be practised, as many are not ‘natural’ as they are sometimes depicted, but rather need to be ‘taught and nurtured’. For example, she argues that ‘if exemplary skills have not been practised in the safety of relatively sheltered interactions, they are not likely to suddenly emerge when they are critical to the outcome of a difficult situation (Friend 2000)’.

What factors promote the acceptance and adoption of collaborative practices?

One of the prerequisites relates to changing the culture within the school community so that administrators and teachers see this approach as a priority. Friend (2000) refers to a ‘disposition of collegiality’ that need to be cultivated if attention is to be paid to the subtleties of this approach. She suggests that a key factor in determining the likelihood of success is the support of the principal in endorsing and providing practical means by which collaborating teachers can improve their skills of communication and negotiation.

Other aspects of nurturing effective collaborative practice include:

- the provision for preservice teachers to observe effective collaboration between experienced teachers (good models) and as well, are provided opportunities to observe teacher interactions with parents;
- the opportunity for preservice and practising teachers to practice effective communication skills (e.g., Friend cites her suggestion that negotiating teachers state up front what their preference is – ‘My preference is that we...what do you think?’);
- the acceptance that collaboration is about ‘trust and respect’ and has little to do with working with friends or with colleagues who are of like mind;
- an understanding by experienced teachers how to work effectively with the inexperienced; there could be a natural tendency for the senior party to impose his/her past experiences on a less experienced partner.

Some excellent advice relating to the implementation of co-teaching models is derived from a secondary study provided by Lisa Decker (2001) who investigated the characteristics of effective middle and high school teams. Her advice derived from co-teaching ‘firms’ includes the following:

- define both academic and behavioural goals; the incorporation of a social skill goal can have the ‘spin-off’ of providing a social curriculum for all students;
- clarify roles of both teachers; it seems that in negotiating and rationalizing the roles, a greater focus on meeting the needs of all students can emerge and be realized most often through the provision of activity-based learning, an approach that can blend with cooperative learning strategies, peer tutoring, etc. (It is possible too the use of software programs and internet resources could be integrated into the mix of activities provided in a more open arrangement.);
- secure common planning time; planning time needs to be ‘fought for’ and jealously guarded. It needs to be focussed and of ‘equal priority’ to both team members;

- offer a continuum of ‘service options’; it seems that some co-teaching teams realized that they needed some other options for delivery apart from co-teaching, particularly where students with behavioural difficulties were involved – these options involved assistance from other personnel (e.g., vice-principal, other special educators) to assist in short term alternative arrangements.

Some recent literature (e.g., Walsh and Jones 2004) focuses on the secondary setting. Because of the need for flexible arrangements in response to the complex dynamics of high schools, teachers in this study reported the need for different models. What is evident is that the special educator in particular needs to be a highly flexible, an extremely organized practitioner with consummate communication skills. As the authors point out the risk of burnout for these professionals is potentially a problem area particularly in one arrangement where the special educator becomes a resource for an interdisciplinary team of teachers with his/her schedule dictated by the weekly programming of the team. In addition, the use of teaching assistants as part of the mix, while adding greater flexibility of delivery may add to the already onerous role carried by the special educator, particularly if the training of paraprofessionals is involved.

It is evident that collaborative practice in general and co-teaching in particular is far from being a ‘soft option’ if these various models are to achieve their full bloom in the service of inclusive practice. Such an outcome depends upon the good will, consistency of purpose and well-developed communication skills of teamed colleagues and very significantly, the practical support and encouragement of the administrative team.

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TAKING NOTE – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

What about the boys? Boys and education

Introduction

While schools as the main agency for societal change are under great pressure to respond to the litany of ills that are associated with boys in particular, for example behavioural problems, substance abuse, bullying and harassment and violence it would seem that at the school level it is imperative to scrutinize the school culture and organization, the curriculum, and teaching practices in concert to ensure a coherent vision is being pursued. A starting point for this review process should be the study and application of the departmental Gender Equity policy. See: **Boys, Gender and Schooling** (Education Queensland, 1997) - the principles, frameworks and ideas provided through these modules need to be applied comprehensively and conscientiously at the school level.

The reframing of the school within a social cultural context is likely to be a slow painful process requiring good will by a whole school community. The challenging of traditional masculinities (and femininities) may in particular be a point of great resistance. Mills & Lindgard (2000) however claim there are a number of principles, which should shape system and school responses to this issue. These can be found listed in their **recent submission to the Education of Boys Inquiry** conducted by the Commonwealth Government. The *Boys: Getting it Right' Report* of the committee's findings was published in October 2002. One innovation following up the report is the establishment of the concept of **Lighthouse Schools**.

The information offered below is derived from two seminars attended by members of RSTAQ. The presenters were:

Ian Lillico who has written extensively in the area and regularly conducts workshops for professionals and parents.

Martin Mills, Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli and **Amanda Keddie** who recently conducted a combined session on behalf of the Association of Women Educators; their lens is derived from a sociological perspective which questions the traditional paradigms lamenting the lack of male role models in school (We need more male teachers!), the lack of questioning of the dominance of traditional masculinities, etc.

Further information about issues relating to boys can be obtained from the following:

Websites:

Education Queensland

Hot topic: Boys and education

http://education.qld.gov.au/tal/tips/hot_topics/01639.htm

Boys, gender and schooling

<http://education.qld.gov.au/students/advocacy/equity/gender-sch/>

Standing Committee on Education and Training: Inquiry into the education of boys

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/edt/Eofb/index.htm>

See in particular the Submissions to the inquiry into the education of boys.

See also 'Gender issues and schooling' listed under **Professional Topics** available through Education Queensland Library Services.

Books

Browne, R. & Fletcher, R. (eds.) 1995, *Boys in schools: Addressing the real issues - behaviour, values and relationships*.

Lillico, I c2000, *Boys & their schooling: a guide for parents and teachers*, Tranton Enterprises, Duncraig, Western Australia.

Lillico, I c2001, *Australian issues in boys' education*, Tranton Enterprises, Duncraig, Western Australia.

Martino, W. & Meyenn, B. (eds.) 2001, *What about the boys: Issues of masculinity in schools*.

Salisbury, J. & Jackson, D. 1996, *Challenging macho values: Practical ways of working with adolescent boys*.

(Available through the Professional Collection, AccessED, Coorparoo, Brisbane)

Journal

Boys in school program

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac/binsp/index.html>

Recent issues available through the **Education Queensland Library Services Professional Collection**.

Ian Lillico

BOYS AND LITERACY 17 Nov 2003

- Current adolescent perspectives in Australia
- A need to belong (we need to revise rewards and the removal from the group to reward. e.g., coming up the front to receive a reward. Better off sending a email or note with a possible reward attached)
- A need to be cool – boxers out the top of shorts; hat on backwards etc.
- A need to take risks
- A need for information
- Need for support to be unobtrusive
- A need to be in control
- Need an adult perspective
- Need ongoing help with – time management; resource management; stress management; fatigue management.
- Consumerism – pressure to get goods – work or steal or both

4 dimensions need to be considered

- ATTITUDE
- BEHAVIOUR
- PERFORMANCE
- PARTICIPATION

Concerns about boys and literacy

- Time factor- boys will work better under time constraints - no longer than 30 minutes. Use a timer in class.
- Problem may not be ability but how to demonstrate it.
- Learning styles: Multiple intelligences- not 'how smart are you?' but 'how are you smart?' Boys used to learn by being shown i.e., making spears, hunting, changing a tyre.
- Use visual aides e.g., "Be a man" photo pack. Learning styles – audio; visual; interpersonal; print orientated; kinesthetic.

- Girls are more reflective step by step (sequential) learners – Natural learner.
Boys are speculative, trial and error / experimental learners – they are a boy first and maybe a learner second.

Boys are raised differently – people talk less to the baby in the blue shawl. By the time they get to school they have less language than girls. By age 8 two girls play with each other and talk – they know each other, boys don't know each other's names, play separately or fight.

Good to have a few students around a computer – to discuss things and learn from each other.

Boys lack self-knowledge about their own learning: they need to receive feedback about their work quickly as they tend to have little idea about how they may have gone. May compare their work to girls this tends to be presented well and makes them feel inadequate; they become less likely to hand in assignments etc.

NEED for HIGH QUALITY TEACHING – teacher threshold knowledge:

- subject discipline/ knowledge
- knowledge of student development
- purposes of schooling
- knowledge of gender concepts and impact on student attitudes and learning
- Boys are driven by a desire to succeed and a fear of failure.
- They tend to over estimate their potential for achievement and under estimate the amount of work required.
- If boys fail they are unlikely to re-attempt. It is difficult to re-motivate.

Influence of the Internet

- Girls tend to use the Internet to chat to friends. Boys tend to play games or pirate music!!
- Boys will tend to work in three windows at a time. They will move from window to another according to their attention span.
- Contemporary software allows boys to present written work legibly and gives immediate feedback about incorrect spelling and punctuation. Allows the integration of graphics.
- Boys love active presentations. The feedback provided is non judgmental and this motivates boys to hand in written work.
- Boys like to fiddle and computers allow this.
- Self esteem can be enhanced through self paced learning on computers.
- A 'scrum' of boys around a computer will encourage better collaborative learning with enhanced student interaction.

Boys like machines, graphics and independence = computers. Prefer self paced learning with an activity-based element.

Findings from the University of Maine study:

- Homophobia not as prevalent in the USA
- 2 teachers to 60 students better than 1 teacher to 20
- Teachers assign and evaluate reading but don't teach it
- Boys with Learning Difficulties thrive on multimedia
- Boys not prepared to make the sacrifice for study

Strategies that work:

- Give choice – read biography then watch movie – compare

- Research and produce a multimedia presentation on a social issue
- Drama – theatre restaurant
- Gender classes – 5 – 7 – for literacy and numeracy
- Male SAR – paid
- Older students read to younger ones
- Use simple quick activities that are fun.

Just as boys are starting school, they are moving out of their mother's orbit. They know that being a man is NOT being a woman. Childhood is getting shorter – we need to prolong it, boys need fantasy. Einstein – read children lots of fairy stories.

READING - General

- Boys love to be read to at all ages – use quality books.
- They like to act out the roles from books and films
- When reading they tend to read to themselves (muttered aloud)
“Reading like prayer is one of our few private acts” (William Jovanovich)
- Older boys should be encouraged to read to younger boys. (Sometimes this may be the only male role model they have that reads).
- Use some male authors eg Paul Jennings
- Use storytellers (aboriginal and other cultures).

Encouraging boys to read:

- Get children to write their own story and make it into a book using computers or art.
- Make use of dressing up characters from stories in primary/preschool/ Kindy to make the book come more alive.
- Find a ‘cool’ role model – footballer, etc who could be a role model to read to the class and talk about the reading that they do.
- Form a book club where books are discussed.
- Provide rewards for reading – pizza lunch, stickers, etc
- Watch movies based on a novel read
- Boys need a short-term goal; e.g., number of books to be read.
- Only read a few chapters of a book and discuss it.
- Use intelligent cartoons/comics to appeal to boys’ sense of humour (Garfield).
- Use drama to perform an extract of a book.
- Boys need stimulation to read and write and discuss emotions (useful video titles are on boysforward.com)
- Fathers need to read to their sons. Boys learn through role modelling. They need to see male role models reading. Start young with stories and questions.
- Use magazines & technology (power point, emails).

Exams:

Essay questions – girls score better

Multiple Choice – gap gets less

Oral questions – both score the same

Move to make High school examinations shorter; reduce the literacy load in maths exams, etc.

Classroom dynamics

- Peers play a crucial role in making it OK to read
- Take home reading schemes are very successful

- Home library is essential in aiding reading
- Use IT based reading schemes
- Touch boys emotions
- Give students a jotter on the desk to collect new words, ideas, doodle, etc

15% of all classroom time should be involved in a variety of reading approaches:

- Teacher reading to class
- Teacher reading – class taking notes (to improve attention span)
- Pupils read in pairs to each other
- Group of 3 or 2 pupils read to each other and the other takes notes. Swap roles.
- Students read individually.
- Boys need to read for information on a particular topic for home reading.
- Least effective is one student reading to class

Setting class tasks:

Boys perform better when tasks are shorter; single concept; task based; experimental; structured; action based; information dense; closed.

They learn less well when:

- tasks are extended
- multi-concept; text based
- interpersonal
- open-ended
- reflective
- group-based (this is where educational reform is headed).

Writing should be done using Class Teacher prepared templates to force expansion and order in boys' writing.

Boys must have success with tasks.

- Need time structure: spend no more than 40 minutes on this task.
- Set puzzles into the task to encourage them to begin.
- Something simple to get them started.
- Reward for finishing.
- Most difficult task at the end of the sheet.

Alienation – boys externalize, girls internalize.

- Need to get to know students – leadership must be personal. 59% of boys success is determined by their relationship with their class teachers. Biddulph: Boys 'learn' teachers not subjects.
- Poor literacy skills are penalized savagely because writing forms the basis for exams. Even maths and science exams are becoming more literacy based.
- Girls out perform boys at all socioeconomic levels – but gap decreases as affluence increases.

Reading for homework should be a search for information.

Help boys develop thinking skills into writing skills through steps:

THINK COMMUNICATE WRITE

- (Timer) for the next four minutes tell the person next to you what you did on the holidays. (This allows thinking, communicating before writing).
- Use quizzes as part of classroom learning:
- Have the students set the questions (boys will show their competitive nature and produce

incredible questions on the topic!!) Get the students to make up quiz questions for homework. Class clown can be the quizmaster. Students should be able to ask their questions. Have challenges. If no one can answer their question they receive a prize. If the teacher cannot answer the question, the prize doubles etc. Can be used for assessment on every subject area not just literacy and maths.

SEQUENCE OF COMMUNICATION:

We all tend to abide by a sequence of communication. When we meet someone for the first time or after some time apart we will engage in this sequence:

DESCRIPTIVE

“It’s a nice day”

REFLECTIVE

“ It’s better than yesterday”

SPECULATIVE

“ I wonder if it will last?”

It is suggested that lesson plans reflect this order. For example, name 10 things that are drugs; choose one list 5 good and 5 bad things; choose a bad thing and discuss what we could do about it.

- Boys and men are speculative thinkers and communicators – tend to polarize and be confrontational – present an argument and then justify it.
Women are reflective – communicate well in the grey/ holistic area between right and wrong.
- Boys I ‘think’ to communicate information and facts.
Girls I ‘feel’
We need to revise “hands up approach” to allow girls more opportunity to answer as well as boys to think before they offer an answer.(Boys will shoot their hand up as soon as a question is asked. Girls tend to reflect before their hand goes up)
e.g. I don’t want an answer till 5 seconds after I ask the question.
- We need to provide opportunities for boys to reflect:
Posters
Discussion groups
Debates
Icons around the school
Visual literacy is good for this. Pictures can help to reflect upon what may be occurring.

Make up your own set of posters/ photos to reflect upon – boys choose picture: Why did you choose this picture? What do you think is happening in that man’s mind? Put pictures around the room – might keep more boys alive.

Relationship with the students is more important than the gender of the classroom teacher.

GROUP WORK

Hannan – a third/ a third/ a third – rule of thumb for group work

- Groups work –
- One third of the time in friendship groups
 - One third of the time in single gender, non-friendship groups
 - One third in mixed gender, mixed ability

Have a rolling program so that during the year everyone works (in a structured way) with everyone else.

	Teaching	Doing	Individual Doing	Group Doing
Maths	1	1	1	1
English	1	4	1	3

For example, English lesson: 15 minutes teaching, 20 minutes individual work 20 minutes group work.

Group work development ideas:

1. Basic Brainstorm
2. Structured Brainstorm – around a circle
3. Affirmation Brainstorm – must affirm previous comment before making own
4. Affirmation Brainstorm (2) – random selection – makes them all listen
5. Plus and Minus – argue in a role – courtroom

MEMORY – how much do we remember after 24 hours

Lecture	5%
Reading	10%
Audio Visual	20%
Demonstration	30% - more if something goes wrong
Discussion	50%
Doing	70%

NB – anxiety is harmful to memory recall

More facilitating of learning rather than teaching.

CLASSROOM, BEDROOM AND LIBRARY AMBIENCE

- No cool white only warm whites (we need to replace fluorescent light bulbs to be warm whites). Use greenery.
- Create a creative atmosphere. Paint colour, posters, mobiles to stimulate etc
- Curtains to avoid afternoon light. Deep Wedgewood blue better for calming and learning.
- Music-Mozart effects (higher treble, lower base) at an extremely low level of volume to stimulate. (ADD respond well to ‘head banging music’ – may need own set of ear phones)
- Aromatherapy settles and assists concentration. Use lavender or sandalwood.

Boys need a product at the end of the lesson.

Class Teachers must – listen, care and laugh, use descriptive praise.

Looking for more information? See: www.boysforward.com

Notes provided by **Sue Mc Ivor** and **David Waterworth**

Amanda Keddie, Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli, Martin Mills at a combined session on behalf of the Association of Women Educators held at South Bank, Brisbane

Amanda Keddie

‘Boys will be boys’ – we hear this phrase to explain away stereotypical activities. No leeway is give for the transformation of behaviour – take away responsibility from boys.

Statistics

30 June 2002: 94% of all prisoners were male; deaths in car accidents 3 (males) : 1 (female); victims of sexual assault 6 (females) : 1 (male)

Power/ Politics:

State parliament 68% male; Judiciary 70% judges male: Big business dominated by males. (Is this natural or can there be a different way?)

The ways of being male are reinforced in education. Masculinities are understood to be

- within a system of gender,
- socially constructed,
- multiple, dynamic and fluid,
- contextual and historical
- hierarchical. (Some masculinities are highly desirable.)

Who is the social ideal?

The articulated hierarchy involves competition, domination and public heterosexuality. The more traditional feminine qualities a man portrays the less successful he is. The masculine/feminine hierarchy is maintained by marginalizing female like qualities.

Schools reflect the gender order of society and promote traditional masculine characteristics. Ways done:

1. valuing of physical sciences (more prestigious) v domestic sciences and 'arty' subjects
2. valuing certain extra-curricula activities more than others (Football v drama)
3. staff hierarchy – higher positions predominantly occupied by males
4. teacher practices – teachers can pass on own stereotypes.

Narrow constructions of masculinity work to constrain many boys' options and learning outcomes (e.g., underachievement in literacy and reading, sexual assault and violence).

Martin Mills

Male teacher debate. Issue of offering particular scholarships to boys in NSW.

What are the factors underlining it?

The debate is set within the context of masculinity crisis. (Not true) It is unacceptable because it is really an attack against female teachers as if they are not doing a good job. The focus is not on improving education for men and women – only a focus on men. Thinking is similar to that found in books which believe senior males are needed to lead you through life.

What are the factors underlying gender imbalance?

- Homophobia
- Misogyny

Jim Keen has done some good work on 'men who care'. A lot of discourse is very anti-women and the role of women working with boys. For example, salaries – 'OK for a second wage' women really not serious about their career.

Issue of child abuse and concern with male involvement in schools

Does gender imbalance have a negative impact on boys?

No – making an assumption there is a problem – which boys and which girls are we talking about. Some boys may be having a problem in schools but it maybe because they don't fit within the two social discourses of homophobia and misogyny.

Break of gender balance in subjects. Wayne Martino interviewed boys and defined subjects by reference to what girls like. Misogyny even comes out when people try to push girls to science – a lack of respect for subjects that girls like.

Misogyny and homophobia really reinforce themselves making it difficult to be a boy who might be different to the accepted norm

What impact would a larger proportion of male teachers have on the well being of boys?

Arguments seem to reinforce hegemonic male stereotypes – males to teach sport and reinforce order. There are lots of problems in bringing more men into teaching without understanding why it is being done.

Mills does not oppose more male teachers per se; need to create a context that values education so it is attractive to men and women.

How would you feel if you are a female teacher working alongside a male teacher who got his education for free?

- Men make up 6% of teachers
- 22% are principals
- 71% are teacher directors
- 88% are senior managers

Men face a 'glass escalator' when they go into teaching. Is a scholarship going to address that?

Kids need quality teachers. It doesn't matter whether they are male or female.

Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli

If we look at material with a boy focus – gender biased photos – tough and aggressive but the cover does not reflect the stuff inside. The cover is the public performance but underneath is revealed other natures and traits.

Research with young people 1500 youth - diverse range:

Found boys do keep diaries, photos, poetry; boys fear being labelled girl, geek or gay; girls fear being labelled slut, frigid, or dyke. Issues around gender hierarchy and sexuality dominate girls and boys. Girls' relationships are also dominated by male attitudes and needing to construct themselves in the context of masculinity norms.

CRISIS is in not addressing FEMIPHOBIA and HOMOPHOBIA.

There is a crisis in justification and rationalisation. This happens through rationalisations to do with 1. biology, 2. normalisation, 3. homogenisation, 4. resignation. There is a need to challenge the dominant cultures of masculinity and improve our school structures, curriculum and culture accordingly.

What are we modelling or constructing in our schools?

We need to engage in these issues relating to young people.

Transgressive femininity – cool girls transgress femininity by taking male norms, be sexually aggressive, drink excessively, be 'bitch Barbie', sabotage other people's efforts and work, act useless, petty, dumb and pathetic.

There are multiple femininities. Why do girls feel the only way to be cool is to mimic boys but in a girly way?

Bullying – ‘It’s just what boys do’ – normative culture

Boys’ feelings – are real but the only socially acceptable are apathy, aggression, anger and hatred. Literacy education won’t work unless we address the culture. How are our schools modelling the hierarchy?

We are not challenging or engaging with the dominant culture. Its not a choice for boys – they do not get diversity of choice – choices are made by the hierarchy/teachers – sports not English, for example are promoted by teachers.

Talked about the need for us to own ‘our’ feelings and address them when faced with images of (e.g., a boy dancing)

What have we been reared to see as normal masculinity?

How do our school cultures and policies create and reinforce these hierarchies?

“Never been kissed” (good film)

Suggestions:

- Need to align thoughts with respectful pedagogies
- Need diversity (gender and cultural)
- Need to ask students what they want
- Engage with popular culture
- Get students involved; political concerns inhibiting questioning of culture

Encouraged a self-reflective attitude – What are we like?
What do we accept?
What do we say?
What do we model?

More information about sociological and sociocultural issues relating to boys can be found at the Education Queensland site, ‘Boys Gender and Schooling’:

<http://education.qld.gov.au/students/advocacy/equity/gender-sch/>

There was a wonderful Doonsbury cartoon a few years back about Ted Kennedy making a speech.

After a very long sentence that was going nowhere and saying nothing, the audience began calling out, “A VERB, Senator, a VERB!”



FROM THE BOOKSHELF

Commonsense methods for children with special needs: Strategies for the regular classroom (4th edition), Peter Westwood, Routledge Falmer, London, 2003.

Westwood has been an outstanding educator for many years with his texts providing down to earth, clear advice and methods for those working with students with special needs. His general approach in providing for students with a variety of disabilities and difficulties might be termed pragmatic. While admitting that student-centred methods have much to offer he suggests that their use needs to be 'reserved for the types of learning and stages of learning where they have most to contribute'. Rather, he argues direct, explicit instructional methods have most to offer during the early stages of learning new skills and basic knowledge.

Another intent of this text is to provide some specialized knowledge about the various handicapping conditions. Two new chapters have been added to this edition covering the learning needs and educational characteristics of students with intellectual and physical disabilities. His belief is that while generic approaches can contribute to the teaching of all students, there is a danger of diminishing specialized knowledge. In this text, the author wishes to correct this current imbalance through providing information that might contribute to an understanding of the components of practice that allow for the 'effective teaching and management of the children concerned'.

The information is largely familiar to the practitioner who has been in the field for some time but is 'packaged' in a form that makes it easily accessible to this group. Thus the text could become a ready reckoner for those already imbued in the various strands of knowledge that contribute to the special education knowledge bank. For example, in the chapter on spelling, he draws on the developmental framework of Bear & Templeton to describe the stages of spelling acquisition, discusses the relationship between the various modes for students learning to spell and, most important for special educators, explains individual differences amongst spellers. He then goes on to discuss various spelling methods. Finally, he offers a comprehensive list of points to consider in programming for individual students. Five chapters in all are provided with a focus on literacy issues.

As suggested, the author assimilates an enormous amount of information into a form that can be quickly accessed by busy practitioners looking for inspiration on the run. The text is definitely worthy of purchase and is one that is likely to become dog-eared through regular use.

Assessing and correcting reading and writing difficulties, (2nd edition)

Thomas G. Gunning, Allyn and Bacon, Boston, 2002.

While this handsome, thorough text is obviously presented for the student market, it has allure for teachers wishing to have at hand texts that provide a ready reference across a broad range of topics.

What is in evidence is a happy blend of theory and practice – clear elucidation of the issues associated with the area, tables that succinctly summarize key information, sample lessons illuminating approaches advocated in the text, margin definitions, mini-case studies, an anticipation guide at the head of each chapter and some application activities at the tail of each chapter. In style and form it incorporates features that should contribute to excellent teaching.

His approach is balanced incorporating a variety of approaches into the fabric of each chapter. For example, in the chapter, ‘Building vocabulary’, he acknowledges the need for both incidental and direct instruction. Features of this chapter include principles of vocabulary instruction, techniques for teaching words, four lesson plans including one on the use of semantic mapping and another on the use of semantic feature analysis, techniques for remembering words, a brief case study illustrating an intervention with a Year 8 student with a reading level of a Year 5 student, with the tail of the chapter providing a summary and application activities. In short the chapters are well structured with the information easily accessed.

Of some interest for teachers working with those experiencing literacy difficulties are the latter chapters, ‘Severe problem cases, students acquiring English, and older students’, and ‘Organization of early intervention and corrective programs. As one would expect there are detailed description of strategies traditionally used with ‘hard to teach’ students including the VAKT tracing technique and the Orton-Gillingham approach.

The appendices are a valuable contribution: A – Informal assessment measures, B – High interest, low-readability books, C – Sample assessment report, D – The primary readability formula which is designed to assist the estimation of reading difficulty of texts from levels Year 1 to 4.

For teachers wishing to add a solid text to their working reference collection, the purchase of this one is well worth considering. For teachers in training and beginning teachers, this text could provide an excellent framework and course for those wishing to gain a balanced knowledge and understanding of the crucial areas of literacy learning.

(Available through the Professional Collection, AccessEd, Coorparoo, Qld.)

PEN 103 - Cooperative learning: turning obstacles into opportunities Primary English Teaching Assoc. [PETA]

This PEN written by Susan Hill, explores the links between cooperative learning and teacher collaboration, describes approaches to cooperative learning [cooperative skills approach and the structural approach] and discusses some tough questions about cooperative learning and teacher collaboration.

Stories from two schools in Adelaide show how teachers have worked with cooperative learning skills and teacher collaboration.

The cooperative skills approach is based on the work of Johnson and Johnson [1991], Hill & Hancock [1993], and Hill & O’Loughlin [1995].

This article recognises that the most important aspect of cooperative learning is cultivating the group’s awareness of how they are working and learning together. Providing positive feedback is vital.

The tough questions discussed:

- What obstacles get in the way of students' literacy learning?
- What does it really mean for students to have equal participation in learning?
- How do students learn to be powerful learners?
- What is needed for the inclusion of special needs students at risk of school failure?
- What does it mean to work in classrooms which value differences in culture, class, gender and ability?
- How can schools become more caring and supportive social environments for teachers and students?

In conclusion Susan Hill states that "Collaboration and cooperative learning offer teachers and students a means of developing a new learning culture to deal with the tough questions facing schools. In this new learning culture, teams of talented people can share leadership, synergise energies towards a shared vision, and work in ways that will take them to places which as individuals they never dreamed they could reach"

Gayle O'Leary

THE BRAIN

(program on Odyssey Channel 2001)

Do interventions of one kind or another make a difference?

This fascinating program dealt with investigations carried out in the US suggesting that the brain is remarkably plastic and that current wisdom about the linguistic locations of the brain appears to be incomplete. Focus was on two particular types of malfunctioning of the brain. In the first case, a young boy who was having hundreds of fits per day was subjected to a complex operation separating the hemispheres. This led to the complete loss of his verbal function usually held by the left hemisphere. However over a number of years, the right hemisphere was able to take over the language function. It seems that larger areas of the right side were involved in this process so, even though the right side is less well equipped to adopt this function it can do so nevertheless.

The second case study involved a dyslexic boy about 12 years who was considered to be very intelligent and creative. Genevieve Eden at the University of Georgetown and Marianne Wolff pointed out the great complexity of learning to read and the great number of areas in the brain that were involved in this complex process depending on the stage and skill being enlisted. This boy was involved in a Lindamood program for six weeks and it appeared that his reading skills improved markedly. His brain was scanned as a follow-up to the intervention and it was shown that his brain chemistry had changed. Intensive interventions in short can make a difference to chemistry.

PROFILE

Joy Seary

I first met Joy when I joined the (then) Remedial Teachers Association of Queensland in the mid 90's, when I started in this new role. Joy soon impressed with her expert knowledge, enthusiasm for helping students with difficulties and her ability to see the "bigger picture". She was elected to the position of President, when some of the founding members of the group retired, and proved an excellent leader. Already very busy at home with her own "Brady Bunch", she nevertheless put in an enormous amount of work and gained wide respect for her abilities, friendliness and charm.



Gerard Healy. (ST:LD)

Can you give a brief sketch of your teaching career so far with special mention of those life-turning/altering moves which helped bring you to the position you occupy today.

After completing 12 years of schooling in my home town of Ayr I went to teachers' college at what was then the Townsville Teachers' College. It was an exciting time, meeting new people who became life long friends. An added bonus I have since discovered is that these life long friends are now spread all over the state and no matter where I go in Queensland if I make contact at the school I find someone I know, or at least someone who knows someone I know. This has proved to be very handy in occasional times of crisis while travelling.

My first year of teaching, 1974 was at East Ayr State School with a year three class. CCPs or 'Current Curriculum Plans' had only been in a little while as the expected mode of daily planning and even experienced teachers were struggling with the concept. One of my teaching predecessors had left their old 'workbook' in the cupboard at the front of the classroom I was allocated and I found it to be a most valuable resource. It was a treasure trove of content and strategies. The precious 'workbook' and the tireless support of an experienced year three teacher in the classroom next door kept me sane that year. After a year to settle in and get to know the ropes I was transferred to Georgetown, which is four to five hours drive west of Cairns.

My father was very excited about the adventure of heading off to Georgetown and helped me move all my goods and chattels from Ayr in one of the farm utilities. We travelled in convoy, me in my little car and Dad in the trusty ute, up through Charters Towers. To break the journey we spent the night in Greenvale. That was an interesting introduction to what was coming as during the night one of the hotel patrons who was staying at the motel we were at had become disoriented and lost his room key. His solution for getting into his room was to climb through the small door they used to deliver the breakfast trays. However, he was trying to climb into our room. After a bit of shock and excitement we got the message through that he was headed in the wrong direction.

In spite of its isolation, life in Georgetown had plenty of entertainment and I really enjoyed my time there. Two of my teachers' college friends were the other two teachers on staff, Bruce Robinson and Michelle Marin. They were terrific company and we spent a few social evenings at the 'When Are You Hotel', short for 'When are you going to finish building the hotel?' As we were all in our

second year, we were due for second year inspections. Being young and naive we thought it was only right to be sociable and take the inspector to the hotel for a drink after dinner. The local lads consisting of ringers from properties and miners and geologists from the mining leases around the town, decided they could really make life interesting if they put on a bit of a show. No damage was done fortunately and the inspector joined in the fun. We were subsequently most grateful for the line on each of our reports that said we were all 'heavily involved in local community activities'.

Sadly my mother died in the April I was teaching in Georgetown and someone in the department was kind enough to let me go back to East Ayr the following year to help look after my father. I again had the privilege of teaching with two young colleagues from teachers' college, Lex Sibson and Marg Rankin. What a great year we had. East Ayr had been lucky enough to attract funding for one of the new 'open area' teaching blocks. The principal decided that the youngest teachers on staff who were fresh out of college would be in the best position to use the open plan teaching spaces so the three of us in our third, second and first years of teaching respectively were given the newest and best equipped facility at the school. I'm not sure if the more senior staff were a bit miffed about the situation but no one made us feel uncomfortable about it.

While I had enjoyed these first three years of teaching, my experiences served to drive home the message that I really didn't know enough about this challenging career and I decided to head back to study. My choice was to do a Bachelor of Education degree at James Cook University. I spent 1977 studying full time and 1978 and 1979 studying part time and teaching at Oonoonba State School in Townsville. While teaching at Oonoonba I was lucky enough to see first hand the work of the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties. I guess he was known as a Remedial Teacher at the time. Sadly I can't recall his name but his personality and style are unforgettable. I was in awe of his ability while teaching the whole class to model strategies that had everybody involved and succeeding. He would then follow up with individual lessons for specific children and give me information that would help me do a better job with them when he was gone. His mentoring combined with studies I was doing at the time helped plant the seed of a life long interest in learning difficulties/disabilities.

Which individuals have had a major impact on your teaching beliefs/practices either through their personal style and/or well thought-out theories, etc.?

I may have been a bit long winded about the early years but they were and continue to be very influential in forming the type of teacher I am today. I now live and teach in Brisbane but I hope I never lose sight of how difficult it is for young teachers to get started and how essential it is for older experienced people to give them support. It is also important for those of us who have it all at our finger tips in the city to remember there are courageous colleagues working in isolated and sometimes deprived settings where the children are no less challenging and no less deserving of the very best education we have to offer.

The people who have nudged me in the direction of learning support throughout these experiences are the Support Teacher Learning Difficulties at Oonoonba mentioned previously and Bev McKenna who was Support Teacher Learning Difficulties at Woolloowin when I returned to teaching part time after having my children and sadly, the death of my first husband Terry. Bev was an inspiration and tirelessly explained her reasoning and methodology for working with some of the most difficult to teach children. She got me really hooked. I suppose indirectly then my thanks should also go to Jean Dougherty because I'm sure Bev would agree it was Jean who most influenced her. Bev encouraged me to go to my first Combined Associations' Conference over at LISC in the early

1990s. I was astounded at the quality of the information people were presenting. I believe Bernice Wong was the Keynote speaker at this first conference I attended and she continues to be a world leader in the field. (For those of you who like to know the extra details, I also stuck a friendship with my second husband Ross at a Combined Associations' Conference as he took care of registrations for the Brisbane Education Centre. That was an unexpected bonus)

At a subsequent conference I heard Sharon Vaughn speak about Collaborative Strategic Reading and as many of you know it is one of my favourite methodologies for assisting children. It was through my attendance at the Combined Associations' Conferences that I became involved in the Remedial Teachers' Association, which has gone from strength to strength in recent years as the Remedial and Support Teachers' Association. I sat very quietly in those first few meetings listening to people like Margaret Toohey, Jean Dougherty, Pam Dodd, Marie Burns, Joan Lane, Peg French, Marie Hutchinson, and Judith Smith and thinking, "That's it, I'm convinced I know absolutely nothing about education. How can I tap into the minds of these intelligent, informed caring teachers to improve what I do?" Hence began what I hope will be a life long commitment to and involvement with the issues of assisting students who experience learning difficulties and learning disabilities.

More recently I have enjoyed the enthusiasm of the current RSTAQ committee. Their presence at meetings on Saturdays when they could have their feet up, sipping cappuccinos, is a constant source of delight and wonder to me. They have injected such life into the organisation and I am so hopeful for its bright future. They represent a breed of tenacious individuals whose driving force in life seems to be to never give up on even one child, to continue to do all they can to give each individual a chance at reaching their potential. It is a real privilege to be involved with such a committed group of people.

Spanning my involvement from the old guard to the new is the presence of Michael Boyle. Michael is such a learned, gentle man. His insights have made a valuable contribution to my personal learning journey and no doubt to the learnings of many through his efforts with the various RSTAQ publications over the years. He is not only informed because he is so widely read but he has a sense of compassion and quiet wisdom that is evident in the way he generously shares his knowledge. Thank you Michael.

How has your daily job altered over time?

The major change to my personal work over the years as a Support Teacher Learning Difficulties has been to go from three and a half days at McGregor State School with one and half days at Carina State School in 1995, to the full time placement at Aspley East State School that I currently enjoy. I know some people enjoy working at more than one school but I grew frustrated with the difficulties of having to cart resources from one spot to the next. Perhaps that is because of my personal learning difficulties. I never seemed to be organised enough and was always looking for something I had left at the other school or in the boot of my car. Congratulations to those of you who do it well.

Which "movements/fads" in education have been better than some others, or worse?

I don't really have an educational fad to comment on but I do have an opinion about a topic of debate for support teachers everywhere and that is the question regarding 'in class' or 'withdrawal' methodologies which is probably more of an issue for Primary than Secondary practitioners. The Appraisal process provides us with the most structured and consistent process I have seen in

my time in Learning Support that ensures there are modifications applied to strategies in the classroom across a student's whole learning week. Through the writing of support plans, class teachers and Support Teachers Learning Difficulties can create a learning environment that best suits the student.

However, if I am going to work with a student myself, if I try to work physically in the classroom I have often found myself to be functioning in an aide like capacity. Older style classrooms don't lend themselves to the presence of too many adults and the students, particularly upper primary students, become self-conscious about my presence. Consequently, I prefer to remove the students from the classroom and support them in the context of the class program. I negotiate the content with the class teacher and I pitch the level of difficulty to suit the student/students I am working with. This may cause some debate and debate is fine with me. I'm sure some comments to the RSTAQ website wouldn't go astray.

What about a saying to pithily sum up your thoughts and finish off this interview.

It may seem glib and the terminology has lost some of its potency through over use but working as a Support Teacher Learning Difficulties is very much a vocation and not just a job.

You may have other ideas, Joy, that you'd like to add.

I light-heartedly said to my children a few years ago that one of my major life goals is to ensure that before I die there is Legislation in this country that recognises the existence of Learning Disabilities and Learning Difficulties and ensures that there is educational provision for diagnosed individuals. Perhaps I should revisit that notion. There is quite a lot to be done. Does anyone have any suggestions about how it could be achieved?

The God of Small Things

Rahel returned to contemplating toads.
Fat. Yellow. From stone to scummy toad. She touched one gently.
It moved its eyelids upwards. Funnily self-assured.

Nictitating membrane, she remembered she and Estha once spent
a whole day saying. She and Estha and Sophie Mol.

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From: *'The God of Small Things'*, by Arundhati Roy, pp.188,189.

ONE COLLABORATIVE EXPERIENCE

During the eighties I had the good fortune to spend 18 months working as a member of a team at a hospital school in Brisbane. For twelve of those months I worked as a ward teacher offering some teaching support for children from preschool to high schools. These children were there for a variety of reasons, most of those staying for more than a few weeks having sustained head injuries with another sizeable group having broken legs (fractured femurs). My contribution was a fairly simple one and on occasions I felt that I was on the end of pecking order something akin to a flight attendant offering magazines to commuting passengers. On the other hand, the specialist doctors (the pilots) were definitely the kings of the castles.

What was a salutary experience for me was witnessing how the various professionals collaborated. The weekly meeting was the cornerstone of the collaboration managed by the sister in charge of the ward. Another time there was a smaller meeting to discuss the progress of the head-injured children. What was memorable about the ward meeting was the efficiency of the exercise. It was held at the same time each week and attended by the social worker, OT, senior nursing staff and myself.

- Observations were encouraged from all team members;
- There was a feeling of equality amongst group members with all opinions being valued
- The ward sister (manager) kept the wheels turning over efficiently
- Discussion of each case was brief but there was always clarity at the end about who was to do what;
- Education programs were valued for their potential to contribute therapeutically
- As a teacher I gained a greater appreciation of the contributions of other professionals; consider a head-injured student who had largely lost his dominant hand function

Of course this situation was somewhat atypical but what it highlighted for me in this medical microcosm was the absolute value of collaborative action.

David says following up:

From 2001 – 2003 I was one of twelve people appointed to the position of Support Teacher Appraisal throughout the state. This team was virtual – we only ever got together once a year – we met in cyberspace. Although we used phones a lot, it was a LISTSERV that was our forum.

There was no problem which one of us faced that hadn't been faced by someone else "out there". People graciously shared ideas for processes, documents they had written, data gathered and answers to Frequently Asked Questions. We were quite a team.

On the LISTSERV we would read long travelogues about trips to schools in the far north, family stories and professional contributions.

We never felt cut off or alone because of the amount of support offered on the little screen.

Tony Ryan has said that the new time management is teaming and I believe he is right. As we collaborate to meet student's needs we find that our problems have already been solved by someone, somewhere else, that the things we take for granted are valued like treasure by our colleagues and

we save mountains of time. Doing everything yourself is frustrating and counter productive.

Need a hand? Form a team!

Thanks David. Undoubtedly, the technology can assist the 'no time issue', which teachers face constantly. Still it is a tribute to that group that members were so responsive. Very rewarding!

How can this be applied to co-teaching? My experience was that it was fairly easy to work with people I liked but difficult to work with people with whom I didn't have a natural affinity. Marilyn Friend who writes extensively in this area would see co-teaching as a professional practice that is engaged in for the benefit of students, irrespective of how one might feel about certain colleagues. She would suggest that there are certain skills that need to be learned by all teachers, not the least being a 'bag' of communication skills. Admittedly, she suggests that this priority needs to be promoted by the administration of a school and if this is absent, it is much more difficult for teachers to commit themselves to collaboration generally and co-teaching, specifically.

I would really appreciate knowing how others have gone about achieving effective collaboration, the central plank of which is co-teaching.

Michael Boyle

Word Study

Crapulent is one of my favorite words.

Recently, after a giant holiday meal, my family and I were discussing our crapulence when the conversation turned to other words that end in -ulent. We came up with this sentence:

This succulent and opulent food and poculent wine is leading to crapulence, corpulence and flatulence.

Subject: A.Word.A.Day — crapulent

Correspondent: Mark Stenglein

Refer: <http://wordsmith.org/words/crapulent.html>

TIP

CO-TEACHING DAILY LESSON PLANS

General Educator _____ **ESE Educator** _____

Date	What are you going to teach? (Topic)	Which co-teaching technique will you use?	What are the specific tasks of both teachers?	What materials are needed for presentation and practice?	How will you evaluate mastery?	What will you do with the students who do not reach mastery?

Collaboration, Co-Teaching and Co-planning: Succeeding in Inclusion Classrooms. **Sharon Vaughan, PhD,** School-based Research, University of Miami, School of Education, PO Box 248065 Coral Gables, FL.

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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