

CABHAIR



The Newsletter of the Special Education Support Service (SESS)

ISSUE 3 | January 2009

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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Sean O'Leary (Editor), Deputy National Co-ordinator, SESS
Joan Crowley O'Sullivan, National Co-ordinator, SESS
to Emer Ring, Senior Inspector, Department of Education and Science



WELCOME

Welcome to this, the third issue of the SESS newsletter-CABHAIR. The provision of on-going professional development and support for teachers working with pupils with special educational needs is the key focus for the SESS team. We aim to enable teachers, irrespective of location, setting or experience to access support and continuing professional development across the field of special education.

John F Kennedy in 1963 said that 'All of us do not have equal talents but all of us should have the opportunity to develop these talents'. Teachers' commitment to availing of the opportunity of accessing professional development facilitates further expansion of their learning and teaching as well as opening the door to reflection and life-long learning. Through availing of opportunity teachers provide opportunity for their pupil. Availing of continuing professional development opportunities allows us as teachers to enhance the craft of teaching, enabling us to look at the needs of individual pupils with whom we work, and decide on the best approach or approaches for each individual student at any given time. The focus is and must remain on the learning and teaching of the pupils. By doing so, we will enable pupils 'access to', 'participation in' and 'benefit from' every opportunity to develop their talents. This is our profession as teachers. This is what we do.

The student voice can be very insightful in prompting us to reflect on the power of the teacher in creating the opportunity to develop pupils' talents. Ellen Notbohm in her book *Ten Things every Child with Autism Wishes You Knew*, on behalf of the pupils challenges us to: *'Work to view my autism as a different ability rather than a disability. Look past what you may see as limitations and see the gifts autism has given me. I may not be good at eye contact or conversation but have you noticed I don't lie, cheat at games, tattle on my classmates or pass judgement on other people?'*

Ryan Gillespie in the Primary Schools Essay Competition illustrates a world without 'My Left Foot', Electric Light, and DisneyWorld - had Christy Brown, Thomas Eddison and Walt Disney not got the opportunity to develop their talents.

Ryan inspires us as teachers to continue to seek opportunities whereby we perfect our craft of teaching in order to develop the talents of our pupils. In his words - I can, You can.

"I can, You can."

"As the polio-affected actor/comedian Harry Holden once said 'Attitudes are the real disability'. Christy Brown couldn't write in the conventional style, yet he gave us 'My Left Foot'. If Robin Williams hadn't suffered ADHD we would not have Patch Adams. Helen Keller could have sat in the dark; instead she inspired the blind and deaf. Thomas Edison couldn't read until aged twelve, yet he brightened up our life. Bipolar disorder didn't ground Buzz Aldren. He walked on the moon. Ray Charles transformed his darkened life into a bright ray of sunshine for everyone. For Albert Einstein, dyslexia and Aspergers Syndrome were all relative, hence $E = mc^2$. Beethoven's world may have been silent, but he bought music to our ears. Hans Christian Anderson and Walt Disney brought 'The Little Mermaid' to print and screen. Both were dyslexic. Professor Stephen Hawking has Motor Neurone Disease, yet an exceptional IQ. At our school all of these would be Special Needs Children. Their classmates might include: John F Kennedy, Franklin Roosevelt, Isaac Newton and Leonardo Da Vinci. Attitudes are learned, most in childhood. Surely it's time to change our attitude.

Ryan Gillespie, Roshine National School, Donegal, taken from I Can, You Can: Primary Schools Essay Competition, National Information Day on Disability, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform 2005.

Joan Crowley O'Sullivan

Joan Crowley O'Sullivan,
Director, Special Education Support Service





SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICE (SESS)

Established in 2003 by Teacher Education Section of the Department of Education and Science, SESS is a nationwide service, serving mainstream primary and post-primary schools, special schools and special classes. Hosted by Cork Education Support Centre, SESS has actively supported schools through the provision of professional development and support for teachers and school personnel working with pupils with special educational needs. In 2007, SESS provided support to almost 17,000 teachers working with pupils with special educational needs.

Aims of SESS

To enhance the quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs

To design and deliver a range of professional development initiatives and supports for school personnel

To consolidate and co-ordinate existing professional development and support

SESS Supporting Schools

- Information - www.sess.ie
- Telephone support-1850 200884
- Email support -info@sess.ie
- Seminar delivery /School Visits
- Conference
- Supports Scheme -www.sess.ie
- Newsletter – Cabhair
- Publications – Signposts, Science Differentiation in Action

Continuing Professional Development for Teachers working with Pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

During the year 2008 – 2009, SESS, under the auspices of Teacher Education Section, DES, is providing an extensive range of CPD courses in Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASDs). The courses will be available throughout the country.

Details / Application Forms are available on SESS website
www.sess.ie



CPD for Teachers working with Pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders

The CPD courses are open to:

- teachers working in units/classes for pupils with ASDs
- teachers in special schools who are currently working with student(s) with ASDs
- full-time Resource/Learning support teachers who are currently working with student(s) with ASDs

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|---|---|----------------------------|---|
| • Lámh | • DIR®/Floortime™ | • Intensive Interaction | • www.sess.ie |
| • Sensory Motor and Relationship Perspectives | • Social Stories | • ABBLS | • ASD Course Calendar |
| • T-TAP | • Contemporary Applied Behaviour Analysis | • ASD & Co-morbidity | • Application Procedures |
| • Hanen | • 5-Day TEACCH | • 2-Day TEACCH | • Application Form |
| • PECS | • PEP 3 | • Accessing the Curriculum | Click on www.sess.ie |
| | | • Social Skills | |



SPECIAL EDUCATION AND WHOLE-SCHOOL PLANNING

Fiona Kearney, Assistant National Co-ordinator, SESS. Fiona is seconded from Castleknock Community College, Dublin 15.

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004 is the most significant piece of legislation in the history of the State related to the education of pupils with special educational needs. The Act creates a presumption that the education of pupils with special educational needs should take place, wherever possible, in an inclusive environment with those who do not have such needs.

Schools are at different stages along the continuum of developing inclusive practices. With inclusion comes challenges and change for teachers. These challenges require a rethinking of school planning to maximise learning, to maximise participation by all pupils, and to build the capacity to respond to the diversity of pupils, staff, parents and the local community. According to Fullan (1991) schools can find it difficult to cope with change, particularly where it requires modifications of classroom practice, which can lead to organisational turbulence. However, inclusive whole-school planning can result in organisational arrangements that support teachers towards inclusive practices and do not compromise educational outcomes.

The process of inclusion can be supported by the way pupils are grouped across year groups and within classes. At a classroom level, research on co-operative group work demonstrates the value of heterogeneous groupings in terms of ability (Slavin, 1995). What is clear is that promoting inclusive practice requires planning and access to a variety of approaches. Regardless of whatever teaching style is employed by teachers, whether it be that of co-operative group work, active discovery learning or the traditional didactic model, the most influential factors for achieving the transition from policy to practice is the teachers' flexibility and willingness to switch approaches when a strategy is unhelpful to all or some of the class.

Creating an inclusive school environment is a seminal challenge for the entire school community that can begin to be met by developing responsive whole-school planning practices. It is also important that all those concerned with the education of pupils with special educational needs familiarise themselves with the spirit and provisions of the EPSEN Act 2004. In this way we can all begin to meet the challenge of becoming active agents of change in the development of inclusive education and a more inclusive society.

References

- Fullan, M.G. 1991, *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. London: Cassell.
Slavin, R.E. 1995, *Co-operative Learning: theory, research and practice*. (Second edn.) Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

“What is clear is that promoting inclusive practices requires planning and access to a variety of approaches.”





INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANNING: A CASE STUDY

Helen Ginty, Assistant National Coordinator, SESS. Helen is seconded from Scoil Iosagain, Buncrana, Co. Donegal.

May Kelly has been teaching for twenty years. She knows she's a good teacher, loved by the children and respected by parents and staff. She is only half way through her teaching career but still she has seen a lot of change. If anyone had told her ten years ago that it would become the norm to have several students with special educational needs in mainstream classes, she wouldn't have believed it. She never would have anticipated how well she has adapted and risen to the challenge of including children with special educational needs in her classroom. Didn't she enjoy it so much that she took the resource job when it came up? She loves her job except for one thing - the impending 'Instrument of Extreme Pain' - the dreaded Individual Education Plan (IEP). Oh why could they not just let her get on with what she does best - teaching?

In calmer moments May knows that the IEP is only formalising the planning she's doing already, so on one such calm period, focusing on her mantra of 'Just know where they're at and where they need to go' she begins the IEP process for Cassie.

In order to find out where Cassie 'is at', May gathers information from every available source. The class teacher provides test results and informal assessments, the psychologist provides an updated psychological report, Cassie's parents and Cassie provide information about likes/dislikes, strengths and ambitions. While gathering and collating this information, it becomes obvious where Cassie 'needs to go'. May draws up a draft IEP. A meeting is held for all concerned. May presents the collated information to the meeting and priority learning needs for Cassie are discussed.

Name: Cassie Murphy

DOB: 1.09.1993 C.A: 14 yrs.

Parents: John and Mary Murphy

SNA: Margaret Moran (12.5 hrs.)

IEP Coordinator: May Kelly

Psychologist: Eamonn Kelly, NEPS

Date of IEP Planning Meeting: 05.09.07

Date of Review: May 08

Present: Joe Cullen, Principal; Kay Breen, Special Education Needs Co-ordinator; Claire Sullivan, Class Teacher; John and Mary Murphy, Parents; Eamonn Kelly, Psychologist; Margaret Moran, SNA; May Kelly, Resource Teacher. Cassie joined the last half hour of the meeting and agreed to the targets set.

Nature of Special Educational Need (SEN): Cassie has Down syndrome and a moderate general learning disability.

Impact of SEN on Educational Development: The curriculum needs to be adapted for Cassie as the gap between her academic performance and that of her class peers is widening considerably with age. Cassie needs specific teaching in social and life skills.

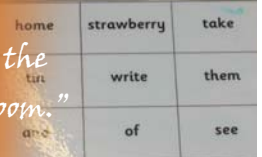
Special Education Provision: Cassie is in a mainstream class and has access to 3 hours of resource teaching and 12.5 hours Special Needs Assistant support. *(Cassie can be in Primary or Post-primary)

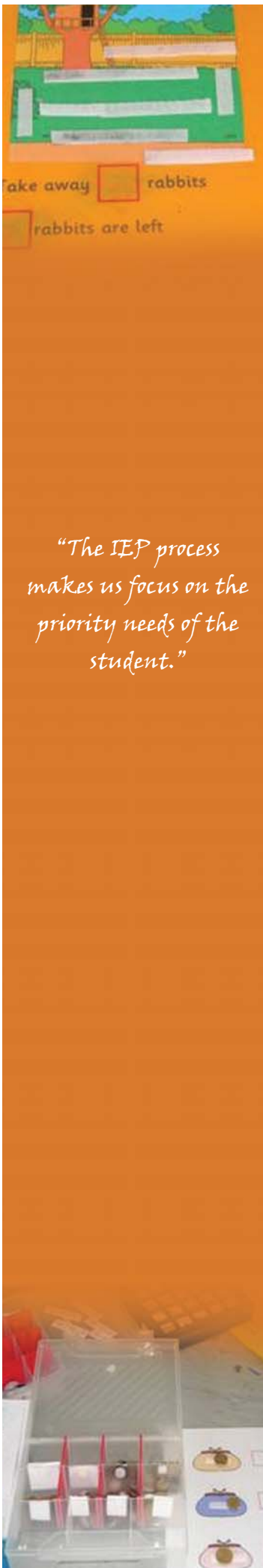
PRESENT LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE

A) Formal Assessment

Date	Name of Test	Administered by	Outcome
14. 03.07	WISC	Tom Allen, Clinical Psychologist	Functioning in the moderate range of general learning disability
02.06.07 C.A: 11.09	Schonell Reading	Tara Ryan	R.A: 8.01 R.A: 7.10
09.06.07 C.A: 11.09	Neale analysis of Reading ability	Tara Ryan	Comprehension: 6.09
16.06.07 C.A: 11.09	Schonell Spelling	Tara Ryan	S.A: 6.04

"She never would have anticipated how well she has adapted and risen to the challenge of including children with special educational needs in her classroom."





B) Informal Assessment: Information Gathered from Cassie, Parents, Class teacher, Resource Teacher, SNA

- Literacy:** Cassie is reading at functional level. She can read most three letter words, using sound of initial consonants to assist her. She uses context and visual cues. She can read 57/100 Dolch List words and all of the Survival Kit words. She can read books with a reading age of 7/8 years. She can write simple sentences, using three letter words and can spell 43/100 Dolch list words. She can write her name and address, names of family members and local place names. She is beginning to write these on the computer. Her comprehension of what she reads is not equal to her reading ability.
-
- Numeracy:** Cassie recognises and can write number 1-100. She can add and subtract single numbers, sometimes using a number line. She can complete any addition or subtraction sum on a calculator, but estimation skills are poor. Concept of time is poor. She is unable to relate 'o'clock' to actual routines. She can recognise all euro coins and notes, but has difficulty with the functional use of money. She would see a €5 note as valuable as a €100 note.
-
- Communication:** Cassie's speech is clear. She needs to be encouraged to speak in full sentences. Vocabulary is functional. She can make herself understood at all times. Her receptive skills are good and she understands everything said. Instruction needs to be short and simple, as memory of what has been said can be limited. At times, due to glue ear, her hearing ability is reduced.
-
- Social Skills:** Cassie is very sociable and loves being the centre of attention. She can initiate and hold social conversations. She behaves appropriately with girls and women but is fascinated with boys/young men and can act inappropriately when in their company – hugging, preening, hiking her skirt up, and using inappropriate language. She knows that this behaviour is not acceptable, and will hide it from staff and parents, but she seems unable to desist.
-
- Life skills:** Cassie is very independent. She can dress herself, make tea, clean the class/house, put on the telly, video. She needs to be reminded to wash her hands, and change underwear every day. She crosses the road only at the traffic lights and is very road-safety conscious. Her parents report that she wishes to be allowed into town by herself on a Saturday and after school. While encouraging this independence, they are concerned about her inappropriate behaviour.

Summary of Abilities and Learning Needs

Abilities, Skills, Talents and Interests	Learning Needs
Very sociable and friendly Loves company and 'craic' Hardworking if interested Eager to please, loves praise and reinforcement by adults Caring and kind Independent Swimming – can swim a length of the pool, front crawl Loves Westlife, karaoke, pop music and disco dancing Loves clothes, shopping, make up Interested in boys and dating	Social Skills: Appropriate behaviour when interacting in male company Life skills: Personal Hygiene, Personal Safety Literacy: Comprehension skills. Writing using Microsoft Word. Knowing to read and spell all Dolch list words Numeracy: Functional use of money and clock. Communication: Use of full sentences. Improved vocabulary.

All at the meeting agree that the following are priority areas of learning for Cassie.

Priority Learning Needs

- Social Skills:** Acting appropriately in male company; Staying safe
Life skills: Personal hygiene skills, cleaning hands, care of nails, washing body every day, changing underwear
Numeracy: Functional use of money; Reading time and relating to the day



The teacher May, in collaboration with those concerned, has drawn up the following targets and strategies for Cassie, using her priority learning needs.

Targets	Strategies and Resources	Curricular Areas	Personnel Involved	Start/ Review Dates Progress
Social Skills Cassie will stay in her own personal space at all times when in male company	Stay Safe Programme. Role play. Class project on safety.	SPHE, Life skills, Drama Language and Communication	May Kelly, Mgt. Moran Claire Sullivan John and Mary Murphy	
Cassie will use appropriate language at all times when in male company	Drama Class. Role play. Vocabulary development	SPHE, Life skills, Drama Language and Communication	May Kelly, Mgt. Moran Claire Sullivan	
Cassie will demonstrate an ability to say 'no' to role-played inappropriate suggestions	Drama. Role play. Stay Safe Programme, Vocabulary development	SPHE, Life skills, Drama Language and Communication	May Kelly, Mgt. Moran Claire Sullivan	
Life Skills Cassie will wash her hands and nails, using a nail brush when necessary, after each visit to the bathroom	Visual Cues in bathroom. Demonstration by teacher and SNA. Observation and reminding by SNA. Self completion checklist. Reward system	Lifeskills, SPHE, Language and Communication	May Kelly, Mgt. Moran Claire Sullivan	
Cassie will shower/wash her body each morning and put on fresh underwear	Demonstration and checking by mother each morning. Video – Personal Care. Class discussion. Shopping for shower products	Lifeskills, SPHE, Language and Communication Life skills, Language and Communication, Maths, SPHE	May Kelly, Mgt. Moran Claire Sullivan Mary Murphy	
Numeracy Cassie will plan, shop and review twice a week	Saving in a bank each week. Making lists of items (shower smellies). Pricing. Comparing prices. Making calculations. Withdrawal of money, shopping, reviewing receipt. Price lists from different shops, catalogues.		May Kelly, Mgt. Moran Claire Sullivan Mary Murphy	
Cassie will plan and review her day using the clock/watch.	Drawing up a timeline of the day (ICT Skills). Using clock for each section. Using key times – school begins, break, lunch, home, Coronation Street. Use of RTE Guide. Bus timetable.	Life skills, Language and Communication, Maths, SPHE	May Kelly, Mgt. Moran Claire Sullivan	





The meeting goes well and all are happy with the IEP. Mary and John Murphy, May Kelly and Cassie sign the IEP and a review date of May 19th is agreed.

May is delighted that her first formal IEP is now up and running. She sees that the IEP, rather than being a paper exercise, is a very useful exercise. She tells all who will listen that the process:

- makes us focus on the priority needs of the pupil;
- helps us to focus on the pupil's strengths;
- makes our teaching more effective and focused;
- leads to learning of appropriate skills and competencies;
- gives us a structure through which to collaborate with relevant professionals;
- improves parental confidence in the education of their child;
- gives a voice to those who know the pupil best;
- gives a voice to the pupil.

May wonders what all the fuss is about.

*"I'm not a Down's. I
am a person with
Down Syndrome...
Down Syndrome is
just something I
have, not who I am."
Share the Journey,
2007 Calendar Down
Syndrome Ireland*





CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION, INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE

Deirdre Kelleher & Sean O'Leary. Deirdre is an Assistant National Co-ordinator with the SESS and is seconded from Scoil Naomh Laichtin, Donoughmore, Co. Cork. Sean is a Deputy National Co-ordinator with the SESS and is seconded from St. Caimin's Community School, Shannon, Co. Clare.

As teachers, we accommodate individual difference on a daily basis by differentiating the curriculum for our students. However, at times, responding to diversity within our classrooms can be a very real challenge.

While there is no one recipe for an inclusive classroom, some of the characteristics that shape effective teaching and learning can include engaging in ongoing assessment, modifying the curriculum and/or our teaching methodologies and fostering collaborative practices between students through collaborative learning and between teachers through collaborative planning and team teaching.

Assessment of Learning and Assessment for Learning

Ongoing assessment is part of our day-to-day work. We collect, we decipher and we use information about the processes and outcomes of learning for our students. We appreciate and encourage the development of knowledge and abilities that go far beyond the formal state exam or standardised test. We know that assessment can encompass teacher observation, class work, oral questioning, practical activities, written work, rubrics and homework. The assessment tools we use everyday are varied and can include projects, portfolios or curriculum profiles. Adopting appropriate assessment tools assists us to:

- inform students and parents/carers of progress;
- provide meaningful feedback on how to augment learning;
- gauge current pupil attainment and note areas of strength and need to determine future learning/target setting (both short-term and long-term);
- plan teaching that is relevant to each pupil through a curriculum that is differentiated in terms of content (what we teach), process (how we teach) and outcome (how we assess learning).

Modifying Content, Process and Outcome

While essential curricula goals may be similar for each pupil, the path towards reaching these goals and the anticipated outcomes will have to be differentiated based on the interests, needs and abilities of the students that we teach.

Our instructional strategies can utilise the preferred learning styles of our students. A visual learner prefers to see rather than be told, is quick to spot details, enjoys doodling, drawing and writing, can visualise what he/she is told but can quickly forget auditory information. An auditory learner follows verbal instructions quickly and easily, relies on memory rather than notes, has better oral than written skills and enjoys talking and explaining. The kinaesthetic learner enjoys practical 'hands on' activities, needs to be active, prefers to try out rather than read instructions and can be 'turned off' by purely visual or oral teaching. To accommodate this spectrum of learners, we have to utilise a multiplicity of instructional strategies. It is also important to remember that differentiated lessons benefit not just students with special educational needs but can improve learning for all students within our classrooms.

Collaborative Practice

Establishing meaningful collaborative practices within schools can help to reduce the isolation felt by teachers in facilitating inclusive classrooms. Have we tried team teaching? Do we liaise with the resource/learning support teachers/class teachers/subject teachers and others for ideas/information on the pupil that supports and facilitates inclusion? Is our planning collaborative?

Team Teaching involves two or more teachers delivering instruction to a group of students with diverse learning needs within the same classroom. Very often when teachers with different areas of expertise and skill work together, they are better able to individually tailor learning programmes for individual students.





Table: Some Benefits of Team Teaching

Benefits for the Pupil	Benefits for the Teacher	Benefits for the School
<p>Enables pupils to be grouped according to their needs. Supports inclusion through access to the curriculum without the stigma of withdrawal. Provides differentiated learning experiences for all students with diverse needs and abilities. Allows for great variety of teacher skills and modes of working.</p>	<p>Allows for the Learning Support and Resource Teacher to deal with larger numbers of pupils than if they were working solely on their own. Avoids teacher isolation. Provides opportunities for shared decisions. Shares planning, workload and good practice. Diffuses behavioural problems.</p>	<p>Allows for greater inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes. Makes additional support available to a whole class group while monitoring and supporting individual pupils. Promotes positive relationships between pupil and teachers. Allows for modelling of positive behaviour in classrooms. Allows teachers to differentiate programmes of work and support initiatives within the school.</p>

While team teaching is an effective methodology within the inclusive classroom, collaboration also extends to our work with other teachers. Such collaboration could simply involve sharing ideas on suitable learning approaches for pupils with special educational needs or it could involve detailed subject-planning. In our schools, we should avoid supporting disconnected systems which operate totally separate curricula and goals. Sharing both information and expertise on methodologies and materials helps us to support all of our pupils more effectively.

We can also encourage collaboration between pupils as a path towards promoting improved learning as well as fostering greater inclusivity within our schools. When our pupils work collaboratively, a shared atmosphere of learning is established where participation is paramount. Activities that facilitate collaborative pupil practices include whole-class discussion, brainstorms, role plays, peer-tutoring, group problem-solving and circle time.

“I now use a lot of mind mapping and brainstorming using key words. This works well with all classes because all my students can become involved. I use a lot of role-play and other practical activities like interviewing, poetry presentation and drama. These activities build my students’ self-confidence and provide an alternative to chalk and talk. Parents are invited to see their child’s presentation so it is a good way of getting parents involved in their children’s education.....”

Quote from a post-primary teacher



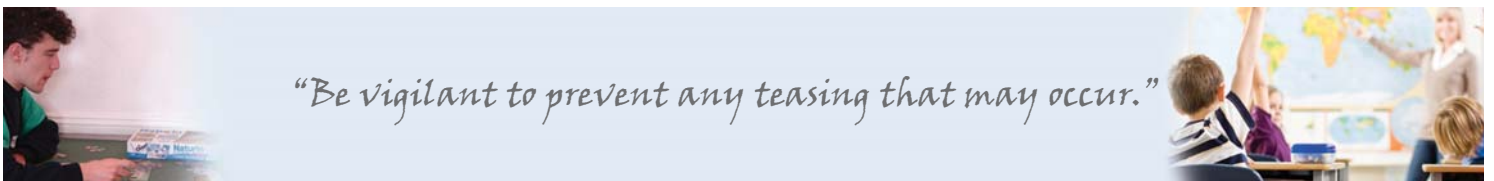


LEARNING AND TEACHING OF PUPILS WITH TOURETTE SYNDROME

*"I have Tourettes, but Tourettes doesn't have me."
Title of HBO documentary aired 11 December 2005,
Listed on <http://tsa-usa.org/>*

The following tips are taken from Signposts: A Resource Pack for Teachers, which has been developed by the SESS to provide information for teachers across the spectrum of special educational needs.

- *Seat the student at the side/front of the classroom in order to provide special attention for instructions/directions. This will also enable the student to refocus when necessary.*
- *Be vigilant to prevent any teasing that may occur.*
- *Provide a quiet place for the student to complete activities and tasks.*
- *Consider providing the student with a headset to play instrumental music in order to block out distractions.*
- *Allow for freedom of movement in the classroom.*
- *Providing the student with a small squeeze toy to fidget with during times when concentration is needed may be of assistance.*
- *Break down assignments into component parts and give shorter time frames for task completion.*
- *Make use of a computer to reduce the need for handwriting.*
- *Pair with a mentor if the tic causes an activity to be unsafe (e.g. a scientific experiment).*
- *Establish an agreed hand gesture/signal as a reminder to refocus during listening periods.*
- *Put a token reward system in place to manage student's impulsive behaviour.*
- *Do not rebuke the student for engaging in tic behaviour.*
- *Students often have a need for strict routine.*
- *Directly teach organisational skills.*





SPOTLIGHT

Cabhair: Support Resources for Teachers:

SESS is currently circulating a number of resources to schools. It is hoped that the resources will provide additional supports to teachers to assist them in meeting the learning and teaching needs of students with special educational needs. The resources comprise:

- **Signposts: A Resource Pack for Teachers**

Teachers have articulated a need for accessible information to assist them in enhancing the learning and teaching of students with special educational needs. This resource pack provides information for teachers across the spectrum of special educational needs through focusing on the nature of the special educational need, providing tips for learning and teaching in addition to outlining particularly relevant information with regard to relevant resources and reference materials.

- **Science Differentiation in Action: Practical Strategies for Adapting Learning and Teaching in Science for Students with Diverse Needs and Abilities**

This resource pack provides professional development and support for post-primary teachers by providing practical examples of differentiated lesson plans together with worksheets, activities and ideas that can be implemented in science classrooms by teachers working with students with diverse learning needs at Junior Certificate level.

- **Differentiation in Action (DVD)**

The DVD highlights a number of methodologies and strategies that teachers can use to include students with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms.

Teachers of students who are Deaf/Hearing Impaired

Teachers of students who are Deaf/Hearing Impaired will be offered an opportunity to engage in a two-day continuing professional development seminar (CPD) with Sue Lewis in 2009. The focus of this CPD will be on the assessment of language when working with students who are deaf/hearing impaired.

Evening Courses

SESS intends to host a series of 2-hour evening seminars around the country in 2009. The seminars delivered by the SESS team of Advisors, Associates and Tutors will focus on Transition of Students with Special Educational Needs, Management of Challenging Behaviour, Differentiation and Individual Education Plans. Final details of these courses will be posted on the SESS website.

International Speakers

Professor Tony Attwood will deliver seminars in Dublin Athlone and Limerick in 2009. Further details will be made available through the website.

Accredited Special Education Course for Teachers working with students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders-St. Angela's College, Sligo

Twenty Five Teachers commenced the new Post-Graduate programme in Special Educational Needs (Autism) in St. Angela's College on September 29th. The programme is being provided by St. Angela's in collaboration with Teacher Education Section and SESS. Successful candidates will complete the post-graduate programme to certificate or diploma level with a pathway available to a Masters Degree.

Continuing Professional Development for Teachers working with Students with ASDs

This programme continues to be provided at local and regional level. A calendar of events was recently distributed to primary and post-primary schools with autism classes and special schools.

SESS Support Scheme

1. **In-School Support**
Schools may be looking for advice or support relating to a specific special education issue in the school. The SESS may be in a position to offer telephone advice, a school visit from a member of the team, or an in-service course for the staff.
2. **Individual Professional Development**
Individual teachers may wish to attend a course that is specific to their professional development needs and to the needs of their students and school.
3. **Group Professional Development Initiatives**
A school, group of teachers or professional organisation may wish to undertake a professional development activity in relation to a specific area of interest
4. **Telephone Helpline and E-mail Support**
A telephone helpline is available at 1850 200884 and email support is available through this website at info@sess.ie

Applications for the Supports Scheme are available through the SESS website www.sess.ie

Department of Education and Science Notice

The circulars relating to the provision of Post-Graduate Programmes of Continuing Professional Development in the areas of Learning Support and Special Education for the 2009/2010 academic year onwards will now be available on-line only. When these circulars become available, a letter will issue to all schools drawing attention to their availability. Applications will continue to be made in the usual way.

THE LETTER 'C': TERMINOLOGY IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Deirdre Kelleher, Madeline Hickey & Tom Daly, Assistant National Coordinators, SESS. Deirdre is seconded from Scoil Naomh Laichtin, Donoughmore, Co. Cork, Madeline is seconded from St. Mary's School for Deaf Girls, Cabra, Dublin 7 and Tom is seconded from Boherbue Comprehensive School, Boherbue, Mallow, Co. Cork.

CAPTIONING

Captioning is a text display of spoken words, which is presented on a television or a movie screen. This allows a deaf or hard-of-hearing viewer to follow the dialogue and action simultaneously.

CAUSE AND EFFECT SOFTWARE/TOYS

Cause and effect involve the pupil doing something in order to stimulate a reaction. This teaches the cognitive concept of cause and effect. Examples include spinning a ball top and using pop-up toys.

CENTRAL AUDITORY PROCESSING DISORDER

A central auditory processing disorder leads to difficulty in differentiating, recognising, or understanding sounds when hearing and intelligence are normal.

CEREBRAL PALSY

Cerebral Palsy refers to a group of complicated conditions that affect movement and posture because of damage to, or failure in the development of, that part of the brain which controls movement. This occurs before or during birth, or during early childhood before the brain's growth has reached a certain level of maturity. The condition itself does not normally change but individuals with cerebral palsy can become increasingly better at managing their difficulties as they get older. Generally speaking, cerebral palsy is characterised by involuntary jerking movements, a poor sense of balance, spastic muscles and speech impairment.

CLEFT LIP AND PALATE

Cleft Lip Palate is caused when the two plates of the skull, which form the hard palate (roof of the mouth) are not completely joined at birth. The condition can cause problems with speech. The size of the cleft is not an indicator of how serious speech problems are likely to be - even a small cleft can affect speech. Most children go on to speak normally after some speech therapy, although sometimes further surgery will be needed to improve palate function. Children with clefts can sometimes have nasal sounding speech.

COCHLEAR IMPLANT

The cochlea is the snail-shaped structure in the inner ear that contains the organ of hearing. The cochlea is lined with sensitive hairs, which trigger the generation of nerve signals that are sent to the brain. The cochlear implant is a medical device that bypasses damaged structures of the inner ear and directly stimulates the auditory nerve, allowing some deaf individuals to learn to hear and interpret sounds and speech.

COGNITION

Cognition refers to thinking skills that include perception, memory, awareness, reasoning, judgment, intellect, and imagination.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is the process by which messages are conveyed, as in talking, writing, and gesture. Auditory communication, for example, includes speaking, singing and tone of voice. Communication can also be non-verbal, such as subtlety of gesture ('body language'), sign language, touch, eye contact, or the use of writing.

COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Messages can be communicated through a wide range of devices. These can range from simple picture boards to more complex options such as phone texting and digital speech synthesizers.

COMMUNICATION DISORDER

A communication disorder results in a difficulty with speaking or communicating. These disorders range from an inability to pronounce or interpret sounds correctly to being completely unable to speak or understand speech. Causes include autistic spectrum disorders, brain injury, learning disorders, developmental disabilities, voice problems, hearing disorders and deafness.

CONDUCT DISORDER

A communication disorder results in a difficulty with speaking or communicating. These disorders range from an inability to pronounce or interpret sounds correctly to being completely unable to speak or understand speech. Causes include autistic spectrum disorders, brain injury, learning disorders, developmental disabilities, voice problems, hearing disorders and deafness.

CONDUCT DISORDER

A conduct disorder is a psychiatric condition occurring in childhood and adolescence, and is characterised by a longstanding pattern of violations of behavioural rules and norms. This leads to associated behaviour which may be considered antisocial.

CONDUCTIVE HEARING LOSS

A conductive hearing loss is caused by damage to the outer or middle ear. This type of hearing loss can usually be reduced or eliminated through medical and/or surgical treatment. It may occur in conjunction with sensorineural hearing loss, which stems from nerve damage in the inner ear.

CONGENITAL CATARACT

A congenital cataract is an opacity (cloudiness) in the lens of the eye that is present at birth or develops shortly after. In the case of a newborn infant, a cataract causes the immature visual system to be deprived of the stimulation needed for typical development. If left untreated, permanent visual loss may occur.

CO-OPERATIVE TEACHING

The term co-operative teaching denotes any arrangement where two or more teachers work together in a collaborative way in their teaching. It is especially useful when resource teachers and/or learning-support teachers collaborate with mainstream teachers to focus on the particular needs of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes.

CO-OPERATIVE LEARNING

Co-operative learning involves pupils learning socially, in pairs or small groups, through a variety of structures and activities.

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