

Special Education

News & Views

First Edition - Winter 2003

Being a Special Teacher to Exceptional Students

Exceptional students with specific needs as outlined within their IEP, can give FSL teachers the greatest concerns. We must never be afraid of the challenges, which these students bring to our program.

As educators we want to empower students with knowledge and wisdom so that they will have an intense desire to make a difference in the world. One must remember that a person's intellect is a direct gift from God, and we as educators must educate the child so that they can use their special gift to go out in the world and change it for the better. Here are some strategies that I use as a FSL teacher when meeting the needs of these exceptional students.

It is sometimes a challenge when we are in and out of the classroom in twenty or forty minutes. For most teachers, the French program, is tied instrumentally to the planning/preparation time schedule, so where do we begin when it comes to those special needs students in our classroom? First and foremost, one must totally believe in the ability of oneself to successfully and efficiently deliver the French program to every student in the classroom, regardless of where they stand on the learning scale. Once the comfort levels of student and French teacher are attained, both are ready to move forth and conquer new horizons. Second, it is important that you, the French teacher, work hand in hand with the homeroom teacher as well as the Special Ed teacher in regards to what can be done so that we are able to move the student's learning forward.

Third, when making groups for oral presentation it would be very beneficial



for all students if each group be a mosaic of learning levels of the overall make up of a particular class. Placing students who are at different levels within a group, adds a challenge to everyone because it allows them to search deep within each other and mesh their own unique gifts that they have to offer. In a group dynamic one finds students working at a more intense level of peer mentoring, but it also allows the opportunity to empower students.

Finally, there are different techniques one can implement for these students when it comes to test taking. One thing I always do is go over the test with the individual

child and highlight those sections in which they feel comfortable and confident that they can succeed. I also encourage them to try any other section of the test. I then evaluate the correct answers as bonus marks, any incorrect answer never goes against their final mark. The reason I do this is to see which new part of the French curriculum the child understands and what are the child's next steps or challenges they are ready to take as participants in the program.

These exceptional students are always given as much time as they need when taking a test. The extra time could be with me, as I move to my next class or sometimes I make arrangements with their SERT/SERC teachers to take the test in their classroom/office. Another strategy I use with the students is allowing them the use of their crib notes, which I make up based on the part of the curriculum being tested. They can always have the use of a French/English dictionary, their notebook and their verb book when taking the test. I find that using all the above-mentioned strategies allows for every exceptional child to feel not only important but also experience a sense of belonging with the rest of their peers in the French classroom.

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Special Ed at St. Isaac Jogues

A story of growth and success

My name is Walter Matos and I'm St. Isaac Jogues' special education classroom teacher. I recall the day I received the proposal to open St. Isaac's first Moderate/Severe needs class. I took on the role knowing only a few of the challenges I would eventually encounter.

Opening a new school, let alone starting a new class, definitely has its challenges. A great deal of time was spent throughout the month of June gathering information on my new students and visiting other Severe Needs class settings throughout the Board to get ideas on how to run a class of this nature. Board wide Itinerant Resource Teacher, Jaye Carr, and Special Education Acting Consultant, Joyce Anderson, gave me a tremendous amount of support and resource.

As the summer ended I believed that I had it all together and then I walked into my classroom in late August. There were no doors for wheelchair access, no electricity, or running water and I wondered how is this going work? I found the answer in teamwork. It was important to build relationships not only with Board personnel but also with the parents of the students about to be placed in my care, as well as the endless stream of workmen, masons, and electricians who passed through my room throughout the summer and early Fall. Collaboration and a common sense of community responsibility helped to make this classroom become what it is today.

Currently I work with two exceptional educational resource workers, the school's Child and Youth Worker, nursing staff (Janis Watts) provided through Community Care Access of Peel, Erinoak, the Board PDD Team, and my staff colleagues to ensure that my special needs students receive an individualized education while being given the opportunity to enjoy a social life in a regular school setting with children of their own age. We, at St. Isaac Jogues, believe that all children are social, physical, emotional beings who deserve to be happy, cared for, loved, and respected. This in turn facilitates a sense of community at St. Isaac Jogues that celebrates and supports diversity.

Walter Matos
St. Isaac Jogues Elementary School

The Special Education Department

Re-organization within the Program Department means that in September 2003, Superintendent Sheila McWatters will be leading us as the Superintendent of Special Education. Sheila has worked as Principal for Special Education and is currently the Superintendent for Mississauga Central Family of Schools.

We are sure that Sheila will be missed in Mississauga Central and we will miss our current Superintendent, Brendan Barnet. However, September 2003 will bring new changes and challenges and we look forward to renewing our connections with Sheila.

Thanks to everyone who has supported the Special Education Department.

Special mention to John Kadanoff ICT who helps us with our website, Gary Kitchen- Printing Services who has been instrumental in supporting the Assessment Continuum, Peter Atkinson, John Steele and Mike Kirby for their on-going support with the IEP engine, Sharon Casey for her work on staff development, Marcelle McShine and Trish Moraghan with the assessment continuum, Family Special Education Consultants (Acting), the Chiefs of Service and Sr. Child and Youth Worker for on-going support and all who welcome our students with special needs into co-op placements.

You are so important to us!

Exceptional students continued from page 1

As a French teacher, when one begins with a realistic expectation and believing in our abilities, that glow of self-assurance will begin to resonant in the students we come in contact with, who in turn will begin to believe in themselves. Remember that knowledge is extremely contagious; spreading it from person to person is our duty.

Luigi Simone has been teaching FSL for "16 wonderful years." He has worked with many students identified as exceptional and continues to seek out new strategies to support all students.

Dear Special Ed...

Dear Special Ed,

I am a school SERT and I have a number of questions about the IEP Engine. Who do I ask?

Signed Need an Engine Tune-up

Dear Tune-up,

Beyond the in-school support that is available through your IEP Site Administrator and Site Technician there are a number of sources that you can access for IEP Engine support.

If it is a technical issue you can contact the Information Technology Help Line at 905-890-0748.

If it is a formatting issue, within the Engine itself there are 'blue dots' which will inform you of Board policy and practice and may even give you a Ministry of Education link. If it is a programming issue, you should contact your administrator and/or Family Special Education Consultant (Acting) for further support.

All Education is Special : Ed

Dear Special Ed,

As a teacher in a self-contained special education class, I have contact with the parents of my students on a regular basis to discuss their child's IEP and progress. Recently one family chose to exercise a 'waive' on their child's annual IPRC review. What do I do now?

Signed Waive to the People in the Meeting

Dear Waive,

As you know an IPRC review must be held once within each school year, unless the Principal of the school at which the special education program is being provided receives written notice from the parent dispensing with the annual review.

Your Principal has a copy of an IPRC Waive form for parental use. Once received you would update the IEP accordingly. Record



this years' anniversary date under the heading *Most Recent IPRC* and in the text box *Other Relevant Information* type in that "An IPRC waive has been exercised by the parents." You should also record that information in the Parent/Student Contact Record.

All Education is Special : Ed

Dear Special Ed,

A parent from our community was asking about special services for their special needs child. They are planning to register for next fall. As the school principal, how can I support their entry?

Signed Welcomed with Open Arms

Dear Welcome

Your attitude it the warmest welcome any family could expect!

First, I would provide these parents with a copy of the "Special Education Programs and Services: A Parent Guide" It delivers what it promises with an overview of both special education programs and services in Dufferin-Peel.

If this student's needs will require additional supports I would provide them with a copy of *Information regarding the Special Needs of Incoming Students*. Families who participate in supported preschool programs and Day Care programs receive this form through their support services. We can share it with families who are not already linked with outside support services. Once this form is completed forward it to the attention of your Family Special Education Consultant (Acting) who will investigate the necessity of any further intake procedures.

All Education is Special : Ed

DPERWA Cooks!

"...very user friendly." "...great presentation." "It was exciting to see how Dufferin-Peel staff pulled together to support students with special needs."

The reviews are in and the ERW cookbook has proven to be a resounding success.

The DPERWA association is thrilled and grateful for the overwhelming response to their 15th anniversary project. On September 25, 2002, a \$10,000.00 donation was presented to Variety Village on behalf of the Dufferin-Peel Educational Resource Workers Association. The team at DPERWA are proud that this show of support will directly benefit students with special needs.

For details on the cookbook and/or the Association and it's members, please contact Teri Dallimore, President DPERWA at (905) 501-1622



Got a question?
Contact "Special Ed"
c/o Special Education,
Program Department, CEC

Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Practice

Over the last few years, I've had the wonderful opportunity to work closely with Dr. Willows, psychology professor at the University of Toronto. After completing a course with Dr. Willows, I was elated when asked to participate in the development of a manual for teachers on theory, practice and games for students with learning disabilities. The enormous task at hand involved translating past and present theoretical research by bridging the gap between theory and practice. This was to be accomplished by developing a reader friendly manual that not only presented the theory behind reading disabilities, but that also addressed its underlying causes.

My psychology background in Assessment and Counseling, coupled with my teaching experience, lead me to conclude that the manual had to incorporate a practical component. We are aware that not knowing how to read is embarrassing and that struggling in front of peers may be humiliating. The question is then; how does a special education teacher motivate students who have difficulty with reading, spelling, and writing? One answer: GAMES!!! The manual includes field-based games developed at the University of Toronto psychology clinic over the last 15 years. Each game was specifically designed to meet a particular problem related to difficulties in reading, spelling and writing. My game contribution to the manual is called Dinosaur Island™.

After a full year of dedication and hard work I finally completed the working copy of the manual. Presently, the draft is being reviewed for further revisions and additions, in preparation for publication.

Anna Cassar
Father Clair Tipping School



Word Scramble...

Think you know your stuff? Try your hand at unscrambling the Special Ed lingo below:

1. vEocIiaduluPdinndanita _____
2. ICPR _____
3. toAInpneurSioestnpvmtu _____
4. uherivoBa _____
5. Aumtsi _____
6. aDfe _____
7. dWaundhYrlorekhCito _____
8. rtiroeRaucosEcrknudlaeWoe _____
9. rTahcee _____
10. desNe _____

What I do, you cannot do; but what you do, I cannot do. The needs are great, and none of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love, and together we can do something wonderful.

Mother Teresa

Reading with Braille

This year, in Grade 1 at Bishop Scalabrini, there is a student who is blind. Her name is Vaiva Dziemian. Vaiva uses Braille as her prime medium of learning. Below is a message that Vaiva has written.

My name is Vaiva Dziemian. I use
Braille to read and write. I am in
Grade 1. My teachers are Mrs. Mayo
and Mrs. Yeung. I like my school. I
have a dog at home. Her name is Maja.
I walk with a white cane. I like going
to the library and I like to read books
about dogs.

The Braille Alphabet

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s

t u v w x y z

Capital
sign . ? !

Editor's Note:

Special thanks to Mrs. Yeung for forwarding Vaiva's work. What a great writer you are, Vaiva! Way to go!

If you are interested in learning more about Braille, contact <http://www.cnib.ca>

If you were looking for some fun Braille games, check out <http://www.afb.org/braillebug/games.asp>

Links...

The Ministry of Education web site for special education

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/speced.html>

Canadian Council for Exceptional Children

<http://canadian.cec.sped.org/>

Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board Special Education Web Page

<http://www.dpcdsb.org/seac/>

Write On

Camilla Bartosiewicz, an OAC student at St Joseph Secondary School, has published an article in the January 12th 2003 issue of The Catholic Register. In the article, aptly entitled Planning for Independence, Bartosiewicz has given a voice to each member of the PIP community including teacher, ERW, parent, volunteer and Planning for Independence students. Common themes of faith and community are expressed by all.

St Joseph Secondary School has developed a PIP-buddy program in which students can volunteer to spend time in the PIP class. In turn, the PIP class students volunteer to spend time at the Chelsey Park retirement home. Proof that example and experience are powerful teachers.

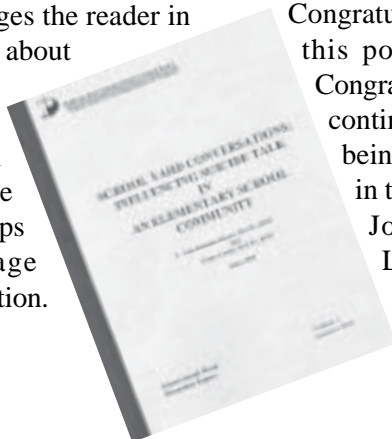
Discussion Paper: School yard conversations: Influencing suicide talk in an elementary school community

Chief Social Worker, Glenn Carley and Lisa Romano-Dwyer have prepared a discussion paper entitled "School Yard Conversations: Influencing Suicide Talk in an Elementary School Community."

This narrative engages the reader in a proactive dialogue about suicide. The narrative inquiry follows a case from the roots of suicide talk through the steps needed to engage students in conversation.

The narrative is powerful in scope and of particular interest is the section on meta-translation: what the kids are "really" saying about suicide.

Congratulations Glenn and Lisa for this powerful piece of writing. Congratulations, also, as your work continues to gain recognition in being considered for inclusion in the 'International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning.'



Planning For Independence Students Develop a Social Conscience

Students from Robert F. Hall Secondary School have always made a point of living the motto of our school "To Know, To Love and To Serve God". As an Academic Resource Department we have strived to develop this motto in all of our students.

On Thursday December 19th, 2002 Gary Connolly (Religion Teacher) and Elena Maury (ERW) took a group of 6 students to the Good Shepherd Centre in Toronto to serve Christmas dinner to some of the many people who utilize the Centre. Two of the students were from the Planning For Independence Program at R. F. Hall. Shannon Knowlton and Alessandra Stellato were exceptional in their commitment to the task assigned them. The dedication and caring that they showed to all made this a memorable experience.

The devotion and hard work by all staff in the Academic Resource Department at R.F. Hall on behalf of all students truly shows our community that inclusion for all is a very important component of education.

**Elaine Etmanski,
Robert F. Hall Secondary School**





Transitional Behavioural Class

The elves in the Transitional Behaviour Class have been busy making Christmas chocolates to raise funds for the class. We were able to raise about \$300.00. These funds will be used for trips, to buy some consumable materials for the class and to purchase incentives for the program .

The students and staff of the Transitional Behaviour Class thank everyone who purchased chocolates for their generous support. We hope you enjoyed our delicious treats.

Toni Caza - Teacher,
Transitional Behaviour Class

Russell and the Assessment Continuum Inquiry Project

Russell is a grade 6 student who is placed in a regular class at Holy Faith- Dufferin-Peel. Russell has been at Holy Faith since grade 2. He and his parents have always been adverse to “pulling him out” for remediation. Years when he had SERT support in-class, he accessed this support. Otherwise, he did without. He presents with few behaviour problems and clearly, does not prefer to “stand out”. He presents as quiet and somewhat angry.

Russell has strengths in athletics and art. However, his language and math, when handed in, seem considerably weaker than his peers. He is always suffering from “messy desk syndrome”. Notebooks are seldom dated and generally poorly organized. Time management skills are considerably absent. He regularly misses deadlines and often submits limited quantities of written work trying to perfect a sentence rather than submit a rough draft paragraph.

What can I do to help this child? Where to begin? What are my guiding questions?

The assessment continuum is an inquiry project that begins with the case of Russell, a composite student with special needs. The continuum is designed to provide guidance and direction via a visual framework which outlines a sample process of supporting special needs students. The assessment continuum developed incorporates reflective practice and provides teachers with a visual reference for key questions such as: Where do I go for help with this student? What are some considerations re: his/her learning? What are the implications of provincial testing (EQAO) on this learner? How do the Standards of Practice and the Ethical Standards impact the decision-making process that takes place for this student?

This visual framework is currently being field tested in Father Michael Goetz, St. Bernadette, and St. Jude schools . Team members include a range of staff: experienced classroom teachers, special education teachers, novice teaching staff special services staff (speech and language pathology, psychology and social work staff), administrators, ESL staff and program department staff.



Conferences

November, 2003: **Standards of Practice and Education Symposium** ; Toronto : Ontario College of Teachers 121 Bloor Street West 6th Floor: Up to date Symposium information available on website : www.oct.on.ca.



Future Issue Themes

In upcoming issues you can look forward to multi- disciplinary perspectives into current Special Education initiatives and programs. Each discipline has representation in Program Department through a Chief of Services or Senior Member.

They are: Chief Psychologist: Debra Lean, Chief Social Worker: Glenn Carley, Chief Speech/Language/ Hearing/Vision: Ruth Jones, Senior CYW: David Jull

Other future themes include “Inclusion” and “Dufferin-Peel SEAC- A Closer Look”

Would you like to write an article for the Special Education News and Views?
Please contact Special Ed. Department and/or send comments and submissions to:

**Special Education Newsletter
Special Education Department
Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board
40 Matheson Blvd. West
Mississauga, Ontario L5R 1C5**

Voice Mail : (905) 890-0708 ext 4284

All submissions subject to review



We Need A Name!!

Special Education News & Views is a launching title for this new initiative! We are looking for a new name. Please forward your creative ideas to Special Education Newsletter at the above address. The author of the winning name will win a gift certificate.