Inclusive Practices & SEN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INCLUSIVE PRACTICES & SEN SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

Winter 2017-2018 Issue 2

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IATEFL SIG: Inclusive Practices and Special Educational Needs

Pre-Conference Event

Monday April 9th 2018

9.30 – 4.30

Friends Meeting House, Ship Street, Brighton BN1 1AF

Marie Delaney

Teaching the Unteachable – From Reaction to Reflection

Poor attachment, loss and trauma can leave students feeling unsafe and unable to learn. Understanding, recognising and breaking these patterns allows us to unlock learning blocks and change behaviour.

Maha Khochen-Bagshaw

Building inclusive classrooms for all learners, including those with vision impairment (VI)

Learners with VI are a diverse group needing access to information and quality education. A collaborative approach and differentiation can support inclusion, while the use of assistive technology has pros and cons.

Alison Winter

Hearing Matters: Inclusive approaches for students who may be deaf, have a hearing loss or tinnitus

Greater deaf awareness benefits all students, and hearing assistive technology can also reduce stress in students who have Autism. Learning sign language can help students acquire English faster and can be included in the classroom routine.

Yasna Yilorm Barrientos

Inclusive EFL classrooms: a step forward towards social equity

Children living in poverty are vulnerable to affective and behavioral disorders. Multisensory and playful didactic strategies can help build up social equity in the EFL classroom through the development of children's personality.

Contents

Message from the coordinator

Welcome to our second newsletter. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank those responsible for this fantastic range of articles.

The IP&SEN SIG committee has also been busy with various other projects. There have been many conferences where we've represented the SIG and raised awareness of Inclusive Practices and SEN, as well as providing valuable insights and training in how to identify and support learners.

We also had two wonderful webinars this autumn: one given by Erika Osvath on how to bring out the best of all our students and another presented by Marie Delaney on dealing with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

As well as producing the newsletter, the publication team is now emailing regular updates to our members to keep them informed of IP resources and events around the globe, if you are not receiving yours then let us know at ipsensig@iatefl.org.

As we become more aware of the need for inclusion and the benefits it brings to all, both inside and outside the classroom, we find that people and organisations are becoming more accepting and willing to implement it. In September 2017, the UK government published a paper on why they are investing more money in schools to ensure more inclusive education for all. This is a very encouraging step forward for inclusion in the UK and hopefully we will see other countries doing the same in the near future.

Finally our PCE and SIG showcase days at IATEFL Brighton 2018 are already shaping up and promise to be amazing events, more information is available on our website https://ipsen.iatefl.org and I do hope you will be able to join us there.

Varinder Unlu

Message from the IP&SEN SIG Newsletter team

Welcome to our second newsletter. Once again this edition reflects the varied needs of both our members and their students with a mixture of articles ranging from the more research based works of Neil Alexander-Passe to practical lesson tips from Vanessa Reis Eteves and Trisha Katkin. Craig Robertson provides an inside view into his own in-service experiences and we are pleased to present Liz Horobin from the British Dyslexia Association who talks about the place of neurodiversity in language teaching. Kristin Weins' excellent visuals on using visuals are the perfect example of how a diverse array of materials will be of help in your equally diverse classroom.

Those of you who were present at our first IATEFL pre-conference event in Glasgow will remember Andrew Wright talking about his first hand experiences with learning differences. We were particularly touched by one of his comments: "there are no easy solutions, all we can do is share our stories", and we are very proud to share Andrew's stories in this edition. Please also note that Andrew is writing to raise money for the Szimbiozis Foundation in Hungary (http://www.erstestiftung.org), so if, like us, you are touched by his story then please give him a helping hand.

Inclusive Practices do not apply only to teaching, but also to assessment, as Mary Burzminski explains in our interview. The newsletter format is evolving and we expect the interview to become one of our regular features, along with our "Meet the team" section, "Top Tips and Resources" and of course the book review.

If you would like to contribute to our next edition, which is a special edition on the topic of bullying and wellbeing in the classroom, then please contact us at ipsensig@iatefl.org.

Meet the Team

In this edition you have the opportunity to get to know our coordinator, **Varinder Unlu** and treasurer, **Anne Margaret Smith**, in more detail.

1) Who are you and where are you based?

My name is Varinder Unlu and I am based in London.

2) What do you do for a living?

I have been working in English Language Teaching for over 25 years, I am a teacher, teacher trainer, and examiner. For the past 19 years I have been an academic manager.

3) Why did you become involved in IP&SEN SIG?

I think it's really important to raise awareness and train teachers in ELT in this area. It is something that has been neglected for so long.

4) What do you see as the role of the SIG?

For me the role of the SIG is to help teachers and students. Hopefully, it will enable educators to exchange ideas and share their experiences of working with learners with SpLDs and this in turn will help our students.

5) What do you hope to bring to the SIG?

My enthusiasm, my knowledge of working in the ELT industry and my experience as a teacher trainer and an academic manager.

6) Do you have any other "hats" you'd like to tell us about?

I wear a lot of different hats, I'm not even sure myself how many!

1) Who are you and where are you based?

My name is Anne Margaret Smith and I live in the lovely historic city of Lancaster, in the north west of England.

2) What do you do for a living?

I run ***ELT well*** – a consultancy that brings together the two fields of English Language Teaching and support for learners with dyslexia and other SpLDs. I assess people for dyslexia and related SpLDs, teach English to adults, offer training for other language teachers, and also develop dyslexia-friendly teaching materials.

3) Why did you become involved in IP&SEN SIG?

I think it is important for English teachers everywhere to have access to the information and resources they need to be able to work with all kinds of learners. It's also great to be part of a global network of like-minded teachers building a community to support each other.

4) What do you see as the role of the SIG?

I think it's a great forum for teachers to share their experiences, exchange ideas, and point each other towards useful resources and information which will help us to include more learners in our increasingly diverse classes. By working together we may be able to change the prevailing attitudes that exclude some learners from language learning.

5) What do you hope to bring to the SIG?

I'm the acting treasurer, so maybe some fiscal prudence ☺. I also have a professional and academic background in working with learners with dyslexia and other specific learning differences, such as dyspraxia, AD(H)D etc. I hope this experience and expertise could be useful to other teachers.

6) Do you have any other "hats" you'd like to tell us about?

I'm a keen hill walker, so I have a nice woolly hat that I wear a lot.

Special Educational Needs: Stories in Language Teaching - Andrew Wright

Everybody has special needs

I teach adults and children: top business people and four-year-old children. What is so clear to me is that all my students have special needs. My most senior businessman is a Deputy CEO of the biggest bank in Central Europe. Every Friday morning I spend three hours with him and have done so for four years. In that time he has never made a mistake except in minor matters of pronunciation. His special needs are to sharpen his foils to enable him to discuss and negotiate at the most exacting levels and to defend his bank's position and reputation. He is bored with banks, would prefer to live in a fair society and loves sailing.

Take Professor Stephen Hawking - hasn't he got special needs? His body is paralysed with Motor Neurone disease but his brain soars. I think I have special needs as a learner. Explanations from others have never really helped my development. I have to experience things and then explain them to myself. I have learned more in writing my books than anyone in reading them. And you? Can you learn anything without batting an eyelid?

An enormous number of students categorised as 'a bit thick', 'not very bright' fall by the wayside. I failed my 'O' level in English when I was sixteen or rather I was failed. I have spent my life working with teachers of English and writing books that many teachers seem to find useful.

Enough. Point made! Most students, each special, have to try to learn in response to one teaching style. Classes are too big to adapt to each individual need.

Students with very special needs

If it is the case that everyone has special needs then we must acknowledge that some have 'very special needs'. The British Council estimated that there are 650,000 people with disabilities in this world of ours. It is estimated that today 1 in 60 children has autism. Very special needs might derive from a mental difference or a physical difference.

Who can be an expert on what all of these people with very special

needs might benefit from? However we have to try to do something, we have to try to help people to develop who are less centric (or neurotypical) than others. We have to try to help each other to help people with very special needs. My starting point is that some people may be less centric but they are no less human. And some of the approaches that the more centric people benefit from might well be useful if delivered in a modified form. Perhaps we can go full circle and learn from what can help students with special needs and use these experiences to help more centric students?

One very special needs student and some conclusions about what she has found useful: Alexandra.

I am not a world expert in everyone with very special needs (who is?) so the best thing I can do is to describe how my daughter Alex has developed. Alex is now twenty and was diagnosed with autism when she was four or five.

The first signs of eccentricity in Alex

Alex, a lovely girl, didn't speak at the age of four. She seemed happy enough but played by herself. Memorably, she sat on the floor arranging her large sized cards of animals in lines. She would suddenly scoop them up, take them to another place and line them up again, totally absorbed.

Order, sense, a path to walk on

Neurologists tell us that approximately 9 million pieces of information assail our senses every second! We are born with a huge number of algorithms to deal with this information deciding whether to notice each item or not and we develop more algorithms through experience. We all need to be able to cope with this onslaught of infinite complexity - we all need a path to walk on.
Some people with very special needs seem to be less well equipped to deal with complexity.

Selective and clear labelling.

Don't we all need selective and clear labelling and don't we all need clear and relevant stories in order to cope and in order to belong and to play our part in society? Alex, almost certainly, was finding order and sense in repeatedly lining up her animal cards. By the age of ten or so she became aware of calendars and presumably rejoiced in them because of their extraordinarily regular patterning. She soon learned to name the exact day of the week for any date you gave her over a two hundred year period. She was (and is) always correct. She is so

absorbed by the importance of calendars in her life that she normally carries two thousand or so in her backpack. This has the added advantage that she is now a very fit and strong young woman!
Alex began to speak about the age of five and soon after we were SO relieved that she was accepted in the school in Budapest (we live in Hungary) which is associated with the Autism Research Foundation. In this school, the students' day from arrival to going home is structured and supported by pictorial labelling…on doors, next to coat hangers, on the dining tables, in the classrooms. Many of us "centrics" benefit from clear, physical, visual ordering. Some people with very special needs depend on it.

Wanting to belong

Alex began to speak about the age of five. She saw herself as a normal girl and expected to play with other children of her age. But she soon learned that she could not fathom the subtlety of the many social codes the other children were following. She observed that children often laugh loudly and run around. She tried laughing loudly and running around when she met other children and they were naturally dumbstruck. And Alex again and again knew she didn't understand and didn't seem to belong. But she is a girl, she is human. About the age of eight Alex began to write stories. She filled her stories with all the friends she didn't know how to have. She is now twenty and she has written approximately 2500 books ranging from 50 to 350 pages and in three languages. Every page is typed and illustrated. I believe she was driven to write by the normal human need of belonging…and as a child, 'having fun'.

Alex's language development

We are a bilingual household. When Alex was diagnosed as autistic I panicked. Could we bring her up bilingually? Wouldn't life be difficult enough for her? I got in touch with various centres for special needs in England where there are bilingual communities. I talked to carers working with bilingual children with autism and was assured that it made no difference and, like for all bilingual children there are considerable conceptual gains in being brought up with two or more languages.

Alex benefited a lot from the number of story videos in our house. In the early years she adored 'Spot' videos…later 'Winnie the Witch'. Of course, her language development arose entirely from her wish to belong, not from language teaching. Alex has been teaching herself German by listening to and watching stories in German which she

already knows in English or Hungarian. She is utterly oblivious to any fear in making mistakes! She 'has a go', one hundred percent!

One family: two schools

Alex's sister Timea (Timi) went to the normal state school. Everything she did was marked from 1 to 5. The marking was down rather than up i.e. what she did wrong meant marks off. In Alex's school if Alex made a mistake or was unable to do something the teachers regarded that as useful feedback for their teaching. In Timi's school, if Timi made a mistake it was her fault.

My older son Tom, at school in England, told me at the age of eleven, 'There is something you learn at school, the less you do the less mistakes you can make.' I imagine that few students gain from being marked down all the time. My guess is that most would appreciate being able to grow in a positive atmosphere.

Alex, with her autism, is bilingual and becoming trilingual. Also Alex has wanted to write professional looking books (NONE of her stories are written in something as demeaning as a school exercise book). Alex's language development in all three languages is a bi-product of wanting to write stories as well as she can. You can't learn to ride a bicycle by staring at the front wheel.

Conclusion

If only I had a magic conclusion! But for what it's worth here is my attempt to contribute:

1. My banker student, Professor Stephen Hawking and Alex all have special needs. If we have 1 to 1 teaching we can, we must, do our best to 'listen' and try to find how best to help each of them, centric or eccentric, to develop. That surely is our job. When we have more than two or three students we clearly cannot always cater for every learning style. However….

2. Funnily enough what seems to help students with autism would probably benefit the majority of students:

- Pertinent clarity and order in what happens and what is expected.
- Relevance, experience and belonging as the drive and learning language as the by-product of engagement in things that matter to us as whole human beings.
- Stories are the throb of meaning except in language teaching where they are, so often, a test of comprehension.
- Testing and exams must not wag the dog of meaning…surely?

Let's try to help everyone on this sometimes grassy but sometimes stony path. Life is not easy.

Follow up? Want to know more?

Special Educational Needs

Stories In Language Teaching

Contents

Part A: about SEN and stories

Part B: Practical things you can do in the classroom

Email me at andrew@ili.hu and for 10 euros I will send you the book on-line. All the money goes to the Simbiosis Foundation in Hungary.

Andrew Wright is an author, illustrator, storyteller and teacher trainer. As an author he has published many books, including : 'Storytelling with Children', OUP; 'Games for Language Learning', CUP and 'Writing Stories', Helbling Languages. As a teacher trainer and storyteller he has worked in 55 countries.

Andrew does not have wide experience in working with students with special educational needs. However, Andrew and his wife do have a daughter, Alexandra, aged twenty, who has autism and who has found her path in life through stories and writing and illustrating stories. Alexandra has written (typed) and illustrated approximately 2500 story books in English, Hungarian and German. Her books are between 50 and 400 pages.

9 Reasons to use visuals

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Awakening to inclusion: An in-service teacher's experience - Craig Robertson

Introduction

The training of in-service teachers offers a unique opportunity for promoting and expanding inclusive practices in schools. What these trainees learn in their evening seminars can be practiced in tomorrow's classes. This sense of immediacy can be powerful, but only if the training is perceived to have been effective. I am an in-service teacher in Hong Kong, studying for a PGDE (post-graduate diploma in education) part-time. The university running the course is making a significant effort to promote inclusivity.

In the Hong Kong context, not all attempts at promoting inclusivity have been successful. Chao, Forlin & Ho (2016) explain that many in-service teachers in Hong Kong harbour negative feelings towards inclusion and differentiation, particularly those who have experienced these practices at work before receiving more formal training. I was initially reluctant, before experiencing my "disorientating dilemma" (Brendel, 2016) that eventually led to a change in behaviour.

Beginnings

Despite having obtained a Master of Education in 2014, this would be my first experience of receiving formal instruction and facilitation on inclusion. When I was reading through the course cycle, and saw headings related to inclusivity, learner differentiation and SEN, my mind drifted to scepticism regarding the practicality of the theories, issues related to leadership at both school and government level, and teacher workload. I supposed that these issues should be addressed first before the onus was placed on me as a practitioner. However, despite maintaining my assertion of the need for wider institutional support, I would come to realise the importance of my own role, and how teachers are one of the most important stakeholders in ensuring successful inclusion.

Awakening

Two seminars in particular ignited a significant change in my perspective. The first was a Major Methods session that introduced me to Andrew Solomon and his seminal work on identity and disability, a ground-breaking book that should be required reading for all teachers. Next was Roger Slee's The Irregular School, a polemic account of policy and perspectives on inclusion and SEN. I had often felt that my

previous experiences of inclusion, crammed into the end of humid Friday afternoon PD sessions, were reductionist in that they would offer brief, sometimes glib, "tips and tricks" to help involve that one student *who just can't sit still,* ignoring the reality that the diffuse nature of classrooms and contexts means that what works for you might not work for me. In-service teachers are at a disadvantage here. The immediacy advantage of theory-into-practice suddenly becomes less an opportunity and more a pressure. The teacher, who 'learns' how to differentiate in fifteen minutes on Friday, can feel a failure if Monday's lesson plans do not include graded instructions and worksheets. Pre-service teachers have the advantage of time, to be introduced to the theories and to let them dwell, and eventually grow into part of their own world-view on education.

Reading Solomon & Slee helped me understand what inclusion is, and why we need to practice it. Slee (2011: 84) thinks of inclusion as removing the "barriers (that) prevent students accessing, authentically participating and succeeding in education". A common theme across the readings is the concept of simultaneously putting students at the centre of our learning processes, while realising that changes need to come from institutions and practitioners, and not from the children. To reason otherwise would be to suggest that "schools are neutral and kids are flawed" (Brantlinger, 1997: 428).

There are varying justifications for inclusive practices. Slee (2011) and Allan (2008) argue from a position of social justice, building equality and equity for all learners. Birnie (2015), Hedrick (2012) and Kilpatrick (2016), required readings in my Educational Inquiry course, highlight the opportunity to improve access to academic success. In Kilpatrick's (2016: 9) thesis she explains differentiation is about "approaches to improve student learning", and how by "truly learn(ing) the material, their achievement will improve". Allan (2008) channels Foucault to warn of another alternative, critical theorist interpretation of why we may include. In this conception, individuals are being included as a measure of discipline used to normalise them, and bring them closer to the instruments of control and surveillance to which all of society is subjected. The difference between the understandings are epistemological and ontological, related to different conceptions of what knowledge, learning and success in education actually are.

The process of awakening was demonstrated with slight alterations in my practice, recorded as part of on-going e-learning tasks. Writing of my own context, I described two possible suggestions for differentiated

practice: modifying worksheets and providing receptive assessment opportunities. I also described a recent class where I was differentiating by content, providing students with different texts in a reading comprehension task.

Implementation

An understanding of the theory does not obviate practical considerations. The second significant seminar for my awakening was led by a guest speaker, Franky Poon, principle of a local Hong Kong school. Franky's presentation provided not only a thorough breakdown of how inclusive practices could be implemented at classroom and curriculum level, but also a touching vignette of how it improved the lives of some of his students in real terms. This presentation broadly corresponded to a book chapter written with Angel Lin (2015), and I used the first three phases outlined to help reform my practice, and implement strategies of differentiation. I reimagined the phases to better match my own context, but feel confident I retained the essence of the work.

Understand

In order to build inclusive practices, we must be willing to differentiate, but before that takes place, we must have a thorough understanding of our learners. I mimicked two processes outlined by Poon & Lin (2015), by first detailing each student and their various skills and personalities, and then dividing my classes into three homogeneous ability groupings to offer structured outcomes by level (Birnie, 2015). These groups are referred to as core, extended and advanced. The first part of this approach allowed me to work past labels, and the next was important for informing decisions about how to adapt lesson plans and activities.

I have a number of students who are labelled SEN. In the spirit of inclusivity, I have tried to avoid such labelling, and the accompanying altering of teacher expectations (Brantlinger, 1997; Poon & Lin, 2015; Slee, 2011). I have two students labelled autistic, but that says nothing about what I know of them as students. The students are in Primary 2 and 5 respectively. David is a very individual learner who enjoys working one-to-one with an adult, often becoming distressed and uncomfortable in even small group learning settings; this could be related to his hypersensitivity in hearing. However, Steven is a vocal student who finds it difficult to pay attention to extended teacher talk, and enjoys participating in group activities like games, and presenting artwork he has made. Poon & Lin (2015) demand that alterations for such students, some of whom may be outliers in terms of our three

broad groupings, be respectful and relevant. For David, I tried to maintain routines with a regular opening task, before providing activities relevant to the topic, such as shared small book reading with a teacher or classroom assistant. David was still exposed to the same language and themes as his classmates, but with a differentiated mode of instruction. In Steven's class, I took a different approach. Instead of introducing and practising vocabulary with flashcards, I designed activities where the entire class (of five students) could participate together, such as board games and card games. All students are exposed to the same language, but the structured nature of the activity allows for a 'chunking' of input, and is an excellent opportunity to practice interactional norms such as turn taking.

Adapt

After building this understanding, it was time to differentiate, and I achieved this through a process of adaptation. In order to filter the information gathered about students through each unit in the curriculum, I asked myself the following three questions:

- *What are the key learning outcomes from this unit?*
- *Are they appropriate for my students operating in the core level group, and if not, how can they be adapted?*
- *What supplementary outcomes from this unit can I push my advanced group to experience?*

The responses to these questions were defined at the lesson level, and generated differentiated lesson objectives, where all students are undertaking the same theme, but on different levels of task. For example, in a recent writing lesson I taught, students in the core group were operating at the word level, the extended group at the sentence level, and the advanced group at the full paragraph level. Such differentiation also occurred in speaking lessons. In the activity word tennis, students at the core level used single word vocabulary items to play the game, with those at the advanced level using a more complex dialogue structure. The gap between extended and advanced may seem large, but this reflects the nature of the class; differentiation is not about creating evenly spaced materials and instruction, but artefacts that are tailored to the needs of the learners, even when it results in dramatically different student output. This kind of differentiation was effective in my Key Stage 1 classes. My co-teacher and I had enough time to support the core and extended groups, and trusted the advanced group to work independently. If they encountered problems, we addressed this in end-of-class plenary

sessions, and in after class feedback.

Assess

In terms of differentiated assessment, I have used the theories to help modify my practice in terms of summative assessment and feedback. In line with designing a caring classroom (Chao et al, 2016), I adopted a 'no wrong answer' policy. All responses in English were praised, and added to the board (to the far side if they were not necessarily relevant to today's topic). This proved effective, as one student in my Primary 2 class once raised his hand during storytelling to announce that "Mr Robertson, I want to say anything (sic)" (meaning that he wanted to say something not necessarily relevant to the current question), before expressing his idea in English. It was a positive indication that a supportive environment had been fostered, and that students felt comfortable to contribute without the anxiety of being labelled 'wrong'. Next, in terms of written feedback, I adopted a system of providing a point for everything positive in a paper, and not deducting any marks for errors (while still highlighting errors to create learning opportunities for students). The rationale being that "Students' strengths, not their weaknesses, are identified and built upon" (Poon & Lin, 2015: 151). On changing to this system, I noticed how students were more willing to work on areas of improvement after receiving positive feedback.

Furthermore, Allan (2008) inspired me to consider how I think about *why* we assess students. We are constantly using assessment to measure, alter, and elevate our students to an ideal. This is not restricted to just formal, formative assessment at the end of term, but extends to our very reactions in class. Teachers need to analyse themselves as much as we analyse our students, to try to understand how these conceptions of power have an influence in our classrooms. Teacher behaviours, stimulated by a certain feeling or thought, can be altered, and this is an important stage in the development of inclusive teachers, and why assessment (in the broadest sense of the word) itself is so important. It gets to the core of what we think education is, and forms a world-view that we take inside class and share (or impose) on our students every day.

Challenges

Attempts to significantly modify our practice are rarely without difficulties, and I identified two areas of concern when reflecting on my journey. The first I have titled *inclusive teacher as an island*. Much of the research highlights the benefits of a whole school approach. During

his presentation, Franky Poon explained that having a principal willing to embrace inclusive practices was necessary for success. However, there is another side of the debate that suggests teachers themselves have the biggest impact on inclusivity within their own classrooms. This suggests that teachers who are committed to inclusivity, but essentially suffer from a lack of institutional support, will face difficulties in proceeding with implementation. While I am lucky enough to have the freedom to experiment as needed to help enact change in my own context, I am still not in a position to initiate broader reforms. It is likely that the changes I am making will leave with me if I change school.

The second gap is *inclusion & SEN in an English as a medium of instruction (EMI) environment*. Aspects of teaching related to classroom management, instructions, and counselling are all vital parts of inclusion (Poon & Lin, 2015), but a native speaking English teacher who does not share an L1 with his class cannot contribute to these facets. It may then be reasoned that EMI is detrimental to the inclusion of students who also happen to struggle with English. This raises uncomfortable questions about the use of native speaking teachers generally, but potential ameliorations are found within the Hong Kong context. Chao et al (2015) highlight the importance of team teaching for building inclusivity. This idea is supported in evaluations of the Hong Kong EDB Primary NET Scheme (2007: 4) that state the importance of "positive collaboration between (Native) English Teachers and (Local) English Teachers". This is particularly relevant to my own context, where following these deployment guidelines on co-teaching has at times been a challenge in Key-Stage 2.

Conclusion

Improving our practice is an iterative process; this reflection on my learning journey was recalibrated to a form a linear narrative. The reality involved a great deal more fits and bursts of understanding, and setbacks and progress within my classroom. These points of dissonance have generated three key insights. The first is that inclusion allows students to "authentically participate" (Slee, 2011: 84) in classrooms; I have seen intrinsic motivation improve in my own classes. This has improved the levels of participation in speaking tasks, the volume and standard of written work being produced, and the willingness to incorporate feedback. Next, social awareness is an important part of being a teacher. A number of trainee teachers enter a PGDE expecting a list of practical suggestions to enact in tomorrow's

lesson, but it is more important to develop a personal philosophy of education first, and from this develop classroom practices that have strong theoretical underpinnings. Finally, a thorough understanding of our learners as individuals is important. Both my students and I have learned a great deal from lessons prepared for them as individuals, as opposed to them as labels. Teachers in publicly funded education have a responsibility to reach all students, and this will not be achieved by planning lessons for 'autism' or 'dyslexia'.

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Craig Robertson has eight years ELT experience in South Korea, The Netherlands and Hong Kong, and currently works in an SEN primary school while studying for his PGDE part-time. He obtained an MEd (Applied Linguistics) from The Open University in 2014.

Creating success for people with dyslexia - Neil Alexander-Passe

Being a primary school SENCO for the last two years, before that a SEN Teacher and SENCO in secondary for many years, and being dyslexic myself, I come to the subject of 'successful dyslexics' from several perspectives. However, I have just changed back to the secondary sector as Head of Faculty/SENCO of a large secondary school in North London.

Research for my latest book '*The Successful Dyslexic: Identify the keys to unlock your potential*' began two years ago after the publication of my last book '*Dyslexia and Mental Health: Helping people identify destructive behaviours and find positive ways to cope*'. In deciding whether to research either 'why there is such a high percentage of people in prison with dyslexia?' or 'what makes dyslexia successful?' my wife suggested that for once I should write a book on the positive side to dyslexia, hence 'The successful dyslexic' began its nurturing stage.

I began the journey by launching an online survey on SurveyMonkey which gained more than 150 responses from adult dyslexics that defined themselves as 'successful' and I then chose 27 of these adults for 1-2 hour interviews. The interviews were fascinating and indicated a lot of school-based trauma amongst those who were clearly successful as adults, and it was this trauma that had been used positively in the workplace as a motivational force.

Whilst 27 interviews would have been more than enough for the book, the high levels of school-based trauma fascinated me as it linked to my previous book - *Dyslexia and Mental Health*. I asked myself whether less successful dyslexics also have had this same level of school-based trauma, and what was the difference between those who were successful and those who were not? So a second study began, firstly with a similar online study with SurveyMonkey and then 10 of these adult dyslexics were interviewed with similar questions.

The results were published in *The Successful Dyslexic*, and also three research papers *'The School's Role in Creating Successful and Unsuccessful Dyslexics'*, *'The Perceptions of Success in Dyslexic adults in the UK', and 'Dyslexia, Success and Post-Traumatic Growth'*.

I was looking for the keys for success, so that more children could be

successful post-school. Research indicates over 50% of UK prisoners have severe literacy/numeracy difficulties, and while it is clear that dyslexia does not lead to a life of crime, I was interested in what factors make a difference.

What I found was that home was a crucial environment, with the following keys being important:

- Parents need to praise 'effort' and not 'achievement', as the latter will follow but may take longer.
- Parents need to immerse their children in many non-academic activities so they can begin to see what their real strengths are away from reading, writing and maths, areas that many schools may traditionally value.
- Parents need to recognise their child's strengths and help them to develop them and encourage hobbies, as these are commonly the basis for successful post-school careers.
- Parents should not compare siblings in their academic achievements, and see each child as an individual with a range of strengths and challenges to overcome. It is unfair to compare a non-LD and a child with undiagnosed learning difficulties who is struggling to make sense of school.
- Parents must push the school for assessment of learning difficulties, and not automatically accept that 'he/she needs more time', as each term they are not learning they are missing out on vital information which will not be repeated by teachers.
- Parents need to know that 'all' teachers are now expected to be the teachers of 'SEND' and other types of learners; as they must differentiate for 'all' learners in their classrooms.
- Parents should not do their homework for their struggling child; otherwise the teacher will believe that given the right instruction and motivation this child can achieve what is needed. If the teacher sees the same result from home and school then they will be more likely to refer the child for SEND assessment.

Schools and teachers are not let off the hook:

- Teachers should question why their pupils are not learning, and refer pupils for SEND assessment
- Teachers need to develop a wider understanding of many types of SEND
- SENCOs need the Level 7 accreditation to assess
- Teachers need to identify which children are avoiding reading aloud in class and ask themselves why they are doing so, could it

be something they are struggle with? Could this be an underlying learning difficulty?

- Teachers need to ask themselves 'you might know your pupils' difficulties, but do you know their strengths'? Do you celebrate their strengths and use them in their learning?
- Teachers need to ask themselves why certain pupils act up and misbehave in certain literacy –based lessons; this might be an avoidance strategy.
- If 20% of a class have SEND needs, do teachers know which ones, and what are they doing about it?
- Teachers need to ask themselves how well can they include all the different pupils in their classroom, is this an area you need to develop further? Who can they look to for guidance?

The research and resulting papers and book suggest that many dyslexics can be highly successful, if they use negative school experiences positively. At school they learnt to persist through frequent failure in the classroom doing literacy tasks, to gain resilience. They learnt that failing in tasks was okay, and that real learning came through failure not by avoiding it. Both these skills are vital to deal with the ups and downs of the workplace.

I think the challenge for schools is to celebrate and enhance the strengths of each pupil that passes through their doors, and to not be blindsided by only valuing the skills of reading, writing and mathematics.

Neil Alexander-Passe is the Head of Additional Educational Needs (AEN) Faculty at East Barnet School in North London. He has experience of being a SENCO in both primary and secondary sectors, and working in state, special, independent and pupil referral units. He has written many books on dyslexia and emotional coping, including 'The Successful Dyslexic' (2017) published by Sense Publishers. His previous book 'Dyslexia and Mental Health' (2015) was published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Teaching for Neurodiversity: meeting the needs of all our learners - Liz Horobin

How many times have you encountered a student who is clearly bright and intelligent but who just doesn't respond to all your usual, failsafe teaching methods? Or a learner who has great ideas and can talk the hind legs off a donkey but can't ever get their thoughts down in writing? Or the one who struggles to stay on task and never seems to remember what you've asked him to do?

Looking back over my own twenty-year career in TEFL and EAP, I have many very clear memories of students like these. For example, the wonderfully bright and engaging girl who devised and delivered the best presentations I'd ever seen but who struggled with spelling and written work, and who failed repeatedly to achieve above 5.5 in the writing and reading sections of IELTS.

Or the student whose communicative skills and ability to pick up idiomatic language enabled her to achieve a score of 8.0 in the speaking section of IELTS but who never succeeded in scoring more than 4.5 in any other section.

Or the boy whose written work never amounted to more than a few incoherent lines scribbled in pencil, even though he claimed he was trying as hard as he could.

Having spent the last ten years working for the British Dyslexia Association, I now believe that, in all of these cases, my colleagues and I let these students down. Not because we didn't care, but because we had no understanding of neurodiversity or how to identify and support the needs of students with learning differences. I now know that dyslexia affects learners in every language but that its impact is most profound when the orthography is opaque and phoneme-grapheme correspondences are inconsistent. As English is the most orthographically opaque language in the world, its written system is the most difficult for dyslexic students to master.

As a teacher of English, you will encounter dyslexic students whose first language is relatively transparent, such as Italian, Spanish, or German. These learners may read more slowly in their L1 than their peers but will, most likely, have been able to master the spelling system; as a result, they may never have realized that they are dyslexic. In the English class, however, they will encounter a host of

new difficulties caused by the inconsistency of the English language and this may cause them to struggle to keep up with their classmates.

Equally, you may be teaching students who have been challenged throughout their school careers and who, because of a lack of awareness of neurodiversity in their home country, have received little or no understanding or support. In the worst case scenarios, such students may have been regarded as 'backward' or unable to learn, and will have struggled with years of failure which will have eaten away at their self-esteem and confidence, leaving them psychologically scarred and demotivated.

In the world of English language teaching there are some positives. Many English language teaching methods are, unwittingly, very friendly for learners with dyslexia and other neurodiverse conditions. Traditionally, EFL teaching has always been open to a range of non-traditional approaches and techniques, including the kind of physical and multi-sensory learning which is so integral to dyslexia specialist teaching. However, English language teachers - in common with many classroom teachers throughout the UK and internationally - have generally received very little or no training in neurodiversity or the various learning differences which it encompasses. And without an understanding of these, teachers are ill equipped to recognize behaviours commonly associated with different specific learning differences (SpLD) or to put in place the most effective strategies to support their learners.

The British Dyslexia Association has, during the past few years, been engaged in various projects to fill this gap and provide resources to help teachers who want to find out more about dyslexia, neurodiversity, and appropriate support strategies. In 2015, we worked with MESH Guides to develop the MESH Guide to Dyslexia which provides beginning teachers with a brief overview of current research in the field of dyslexia and a range of strategies for identifying and supporting dyslexic learners in the classroom (http://meshguides.org/guides/node/612?n=613).

In the same year, we developed a training package for teachers in UK schools - 'All teachers are teachers of SEND: awareness of dyslexia and other SpLD'. These training materials are available for free download as part of the Literacy Leap whole school award: http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/educator/literacy-leap/training-and-

cpd/awareness-of-dyslexia-and-other-spld-all-teachers-are-teachers-of-send .

Most recently, during 2016-17, as part of a UK Department for Education funded project, the British Dyslexia Association, in partnership with Dyspraxia Foundation, Dyslexia Action, Helen Arkell, Patoss, and Manchester Metropolitan University, devised 'Teaching for Neurodiversity', a training package aimed at teachers, lecturers, and support staff working in schools & FE settings in England. The training was delivered in a series of live events but was also given as a series of webinars, which were recorded and made available through the BDA You Tube channel.
Materials are pitched at the level of 'Core Skills' and, therefore, require no prior knowledge of the subject; they are considered to be part of the basic training for anyone working with children or young people. All materials, including the training PowerPoint slides, full notes for delivery, and other support materials, are available on the BDA website (http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/about/projects/dyslexia-spld-support-project-2016-17).

'Teaching for Neurodiversity' has three main aims:

- to encourage teachers and other education professionals to take a holistic view of their students and to build detailed learner profiles, focusing on learning strengths as well as weaknesses;
- to provide a checklist as a framework through which to observe learner behaviours and identify their needs;
- to introduce a range of easy-to-implement classroom techniques designed to make learning accessible to all students, including those with a range of neurodiverse conditions.

In addition, the training discusses the use of the term 'neurodiversity' and its usefulness as an umbrella term to encompass a range of SpLD, including dyslexia, dyspraxia, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and specific language impairment (SLI).

Although 'Teaching for Neurodiversity' was developed with UK learners and the UK education system in mind, the materials have clear relevance to teachers in other countries as well as to those teaching English as a foreign or additional language. This was apparent during the webinars, which were attended by delegates from countries as diverse as Australia, China, Russia, Poland, Italy and Venezuela.

To further promote these and the many other excellent resources that are available online, the BDA has, most recently, launched dyslex.io, a brand new web app which provides advice, information and links for dyslexic people, their families, teachers, and employers. We aim to continue growing and developing the site throughout the coming year, expanding the number of video and other resources it contains for teachers.

It is our hope that the resources we develop will be accessed by all teachers, whether working in schools in the UK or overseas, or by those teaching English language. We hope that they will raise awareness of learning differences, enabling teachers to better understand and identify pupils' needs, and put in place appropriate support methods. And, in so doing, we hope that they will enable many more of our learners to go on to reach their full potential and attain the success that they deserve.

Further reading:

Peer, L. and Reid, G. eds. (2016) *Multilingualism, Literacy and Dyslexia: Breaking down the barriers for educators*. 2nd ed. Oxford, Routledge.

Websites

British Dyslexia Association: www.bdadyslexia.org.uk
dyslex.io
Dyslexia International: www.dyslexia-international.org
Dyspraxia Foundation: dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk
Dyslexia/SpLD Trust: www.thedyslexia-spldtrust.org.uk
European Dyslexia Association: www.eda-info.eu
Helen Arkell: www.helenarkell.org.uk
MESH Guides: www.meshguides.org

Free online courses

www.dystefl.eu and www.dystefl2.uni.lodz.pl
www.futurelearn.com/courses/dyslexia

Following a career as a professional musician, Liz Horobin trained in primary teaching and TEFL, working in various schools in the UK and Taiwan before becoming Head of Foundation Courses for International Students at Bath Spa University. She became interested in dyslexia whilst writing her masters dissertation on Chinese students' low level reading difficulties, and, as a result, enrolled on the Bath Spa University Post-Graduate Diploma course in Dyslexia and SpLD. In 2010, Liz took up the post of Project Manager with the British Dyslexia Association to work on the Big Lottery funded BDA/Bath Spa University research project, Dyslexia and Multilingualism. Since then, she has led on a number of Department for Education funded projects, focusing on phonics teaching, teacher training, and the development of resources to support dyslexic people, their families, teachers, and employers.

8 Behavior Support Techniques for your classroom - Trisha Katkin

Behavior is complex. It has tricky nuances and idiosyncrasies are vast and various for each student, not just those with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorders). The reason why one student may do something and yet another could do the exact same thing could be totally different. It may be difficult for a teacher to understand why one student yells when he is happy, and why another may yell when frustrated. It is because every student is unique and carries with them a unique way of coping with the world that working with behaviors can be difficult. For that reason, I have complied 8 universal behavior support techniques:

1) Changing the environment.

Managing the environment for a student means analyzing the surroundings and altering them as necessary for a student's academic and emotional success. You can positively support student behavior by anticipating triggers, removing them, and teaching coping skills for the future.

Changing the environment may mean physically moving unsafe items from the immediate area when a student is in crisis. You may need to move unstable furniture, chairs, or tables if you see your student escalating. Removing these items is a precautionary measure to help prevent injury to the student, staff, or peers.

Changing the face of teaching- occasionally, your students want a break from you making them do "this", or do "that" all day every day, and they may need a break. Changing the environment in this instance may mean giving the student a fresh face to work with, by exchanging classes with a colleague for example, or inviting a guest speaker to class. Sometimes, a "change of face" is just what a student needs to reset and return ready to learn.

Being prepared is also essential for success and if you have planned ahead and have materials ready, you can take your lesson anywhere! Have you got a student that just cannot listen in a busy resource room? Why not take the lesson down the hall or in the library? Being prepared allows you to be able to move to a different room or setting should your student need it.

Another way that you can change the environment is to be flexible and give choices. This requires advanced planning on your side as you will need to prepare several activities that all lead to the same final objective, however the outcome is beneficial to your students.

2) Prompting.

Prompting is crucial for many of your students. Frequently, when they get intensely involved in an activity they may find it hard to break and transition to something else.

Have you ever been interrupted while watching your favorite tv show? If so, you know the frustration, irritation, and anger that may ensue as you deal with the audacity of someone asking you to go do something while you are "busy."

Your students are the same, many of your students with autism struggle with executive functioning skills and once they have begun an activity, they will want to finish it. Interrupting them at the last minute because it is time to transition to another activity may cause them unnecessary stress, anxiety, or worse, a meltdown.

Alleviate all of this and make it easier on yourself by prompting your students when it is time for a change of activities. Knowing the ideal moment to make these prompts will take some trial and error. Some students will need a longer time to process upcoming change, while others will appreciate a few prompts before the upcoming transition.

3) Caring Gestures.

Caring gestures are the small and kind affirmations you give your students every day. For a student who is struggling, such as those on the verge of a meltdown, a simple, kind word, or "hello," may help them snap out of a dark mood. Caring gestures can go a long way; the act of smiling for example has been proven to trick the brain into thinking more positive thoughts.

Increasing caring gestures is easy, just give a high five to a student when they have done something positive, remember to smile more often and offer positive words of encouragement. Be genuine and help students see that you care and are on their side.

4) Hurdle Help.

Sometimes, students display unwanted behaviors because they are confused or do not have the skills to initiate a task. Hurdle help is the act of offering scaffolding and support to get the student started, with the goal being that once you have them started, they will be able to propel themselves the rest of the way.

Hurdle help stops a lot of negative behavior immediately, as it requires one-on-one attention and assistance from an adult. Helping a student get started even in the smallest way may give them the confidence and desire to continue down the right path.

It's important to remember that students want to do well. Most want to please you or others around them. It may be frustrating for them to feel as though they have let you down if they cannot initiate an activity on their own. A small push over that first hurdle is exactly what will help.

5) Redirection.

Redirection and distractions can work well for students on the verge of a meltdown due to frustration or overload. When you see your student getting visibly upset, distracting them from the trigger may be what they need to avoid spiraling into a full-blown meltdown.

For example, I once had a student that engaged in some mild self-injurious behavior. As a sensory need, he would pick at his fingers until they bled. This was a compulsory need, but one that was ultimately hurting him and exposing himself to unnecessary risks of infection. So instead of trying to stop this obvious sensory need to pick, I gave him a small rubbery fidget toy to pick at. He got the sensory need he needed, but without harming himself in the process.

In this case, distraction worked to allow the student to continue to engage in the behavior he needed to feel grounded while distracting him with something that would not cause him harm. Distractions work well when a student with autism is "stuck." Sometimes students get stuck and may engage in negative behaviors. When this happens, I try and reset the student by bringing up a topic I know they are passionate about. This sometimes resets the student and snaps them out of their perseveration.

6) Proximity.

Proximity refers to how close you are to a student. Occasionally, you will have a student that engages in undesirable behavior simply because they need an adult nearby. In these instances, I will stand a bit closer to a student so they will work appropriately. I will acknowledge when the student is being appropriate, and encourage them to continue by using caring gestures.

Not all students will enjoy having an adult next to them, some will be the exact opposite and want to be left alone when they feel frustrated or irritated. In these cases, you should give the student the space they need, but let them know that you are there for them if they need you.

7) Time Away.

If all else fails, a student may need some time away. This will give the student a chance to leave the workspace, regain composure, and come back to the task when they are ready. In some schools, this space is a separate room with limited distractions and low lighting, while in others,

this may be a quiet space in the classroom on in the hallway. Having time away gives the student a chance to regroup, use their own coping skills and come back when they are ready.

8) Directive Statements.

When your student is on the verge of becoming overwhelmed, they may not be processing their surroundings accurately. Directive statements are necessary for the student that is overwhelmed and beginning to become frustrated, these statements are short, direct, and to the point and get the message across as concisely as possible.

Using directive statements is a great method for students that need to be told where to go and what to do because their brain is in a tailspin trying to process everything around them. Making your words short and concise can help them ground quickly, so that they can begin to sort out the environmental stimuli around them.

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Check her out on social media!

Twitter: https://twitter.com/TrishaKatkin

Pinterest: https://www.pinterest.com/TrishaKatkin

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/TrishaKatkin

Facebook Group for Special Educators, Autism teachers Unite!

https://www.facebook.com/groups/AutismTeachersUnite

Making learning vocabulary a memorable experience for everyone! - Vanessa Reis Esteves

It is said that learning vocabulary successfully requires students to have good memory skills. Recently, I was reminded of Miller's law that says that on average, the number of words we can hold in our working memories is 7- 5 plus or minus 3 new words in every lesson. This got me thinking- How could I get all my young learners, regardless of their different learning rhythms, to be on the successful side of Miller's law? The answer seemed obvious: I had to get them to personally experience the target vocabulary, rather than simply try to learn a list of words by heart for a test that they would have to pass sooner or later. I knew that if I simply followed the curriculum and went on crazy teacher mode, teaching the children as many new words as I could for the test, it would be painstaking for me as a teacher, and for some of my students, who have individual learning rhythms that don't necessarily correspond to the class average learning rhythm or the "ideal" student's, whatever that may be.

Once that fundamental doubt had been cleared in my teacher brain, I had to embrace my next challenge- how could I get them to experience the new target vocabulary in my classroom? I decided that the best way would be to make the learning experience memorable by including as many of the senses that I possibly could in the lesson. The logic that I was following was that the more senses that I used, the more memorable the experience of learning new vocabulary would be, and the more likely it would be that my students would achieve a success rate of learning 7 new words.

We started off by making the words visual with the aid of flashcards and word cards. That seemed to be simple enough. I started off by showing the children a flashcard and sticking the corresponding word card next to it. We repeated this a few times and as I expected most students learned a new word or two after playing Kim's game a few times. Next it was time to get serious and to make the experience of encountering new words just a little more real for my students. We went outside to the sand pit and this time I got the children to take off their socks and shoes and run around in the sand. After they had got rid of their excess energy, we sat down to play a game. One child would choose and flashcard with the word written below, and the other would write it in the sandpit with their fingers. Suddenly, my students

were “fighting” to write the new target vocabulary that they had come into contact with just a few minutes before in my classroom. After a few minutes, they swopped roles and then we all went back to class, albeit rather reluctantly.

Back in the classroom it was time to put part three of my plan into action. I picked up the tambourine and the drum and asked the class if they’d like to sing a song with the fruit vocabulary that we had just learnt. A few minutes went by and soon we had a jazz chant on the board inspired by what I had watched Carolyn Graham do on YouTube. If you’re curious and would like to see her in action for yourself, just google “Carolyn Graham on YouTube” and experience a fun way to sing and learn new vocabulary:

“Apples, bananas and pears
Apples, bananas and pears,
Apples, bananas,
Apples, bananas,
Apples, bananas and pears”.

The children started to chant away to the tune of the tambourine and drums in the safety of the group. I wasn’t putting anyone on the spot by asking them to remember and sing it on their own! Soon a few fingers went up and they asked me if we could invent another verse for our song. We followed the same rhythm but this time we put in the words of the fruit that we liked eating the most. A few minutes later, everyone was singing and smiling, including me! My class was having fun and singing in English along the way! My plan was starting to yield its fruit! We made a video so that we could share our music skills with those that we loved.

Tea time was fast approaching and so it was time to put my gran’s advice into action: “The way to a person’s heart is through their tummy!” she had once told me, and so I decided to challenge my class to help me make a yummy vocabulary class treat. I brought out a big box and asked them to guess what was inside. It didn’t take them long to guess that there was a basket of fruit in the box. I divided the children into groups and gave each group a different coloured bowl so that we could arrange and group the fruit into categories repeating the target vocabulary as we did so: all the pears were put in one bowl, the bananas in another, the oranges in another, the apples in yet another and the finally, the kiwis went into a little bowl of their own. Once all the fruit was properly organised, I challenged the children to help me make a big class fruit salad that we could eat to celebrate the hard

work that we had done together. Out came the blunt but safe plastic knives and soon there was enough fruit salad to feed an army and for everyone to share and enjoy together.

The last 15 minutes of the lesson were dedicated to getting the children to draw and label a flashcard of the fruit that they liked the most. The bell rang and the children took their pictures home to share or to stick on the fridge door. Now, all I could do was wait for my next lesson to see if all my students could remember the seven words that we had experienced together.

The next lesson was a yummy surprise for me. Things got off to a good start as the children walked into the classroom chanting the vocabulary chant that we had sung together and telling me about the fruit that they had eaten at home. Some children had even gone so far as to make a family fruit salad for dessert. I was amazed, the children had managed to take the words that we had learnt together out of the class and bring them back again. Miller's law in action!! What's more, they were smiling and eager to learn a bit more English with me again.

And so you may ask- what's the moral of the story? Well, Rome wasn't built in a day and neither is learning a language. As teachers, we need to be patient and plan our lessons in such a way as to let our students experience the words that we want to learn in as many different ways as we can think of. We need to remember that children have preferred learning styles and that each child has their preferred learning rhythm. This means that there is no right or wrong rhythm. There are simply as many different learning rhythms as there are children in the class. The true question then is, are we planning our lessons to respect those different learning rhythms, or are we simply teaching to the test? In short, we should never lose sight of the golden rule of teaching: young learners will always be children, which means that they simply love, no- make that adore- having fun! So, the more varied and fun our lessons are, the more likely it will be that our students will remember Miller's seven words that are a part of our teaching plans every day.

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Vanessa Reis Esteves has been teaching EFL in Portugal for the past 20 years and involved in teacher training in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Serbia, Romania, Turkey, Croatia, Slovenia, Malta, Portugal and Egypt. She is currently involved in writing course material for EFL students in Portugal and has recently co-authored Let's Rock 3 and 4, a young learner's course for Porto Editora in Portugal and ETpedia: Young Learners with more ideas on teaching YLs for Pavilion Publishing in the UK. Her areas of interest are teaching YLs, (Pre)Teens as well as Critical Thinking and 21st Century skills.

Exam Access Arrangements: An interview with Mary Burzminski – Rachael Harris

Exam Access Arrangements are a way of offering all students the conditions they need to be able to demonstrate their learning and knowledge. Teachers need to be alert to the individual needs of learners, and to pay attention if, for example, otherwise able students do not perform well in assessment situations, whether that is in informal tests in the class or in more formal exam situations. Being tested is particularly stressful for some learners, even if they seem to cope OK in class; it may be that they are generally able to mask the difficulties they are experiencing but that they cannot maintain their strategies when under pressure. It may be a signal that exam access arrangements need to be put in place.

The general principles of exam access arrangements dictate that any arrangement or **accommodation** should not affect the validity of the exam. That means, it should not change what is actually being tested. For example, if a student is taking a reading exam, it would not be permitted to apply for someone to read the text out loud to him/her, as that would then change the construct of the test, and it would become a test of listening instead. However, in some cases, the construct of the exam must be changed; in the case of a visually impaired student who does not use braille, hearing a text in a reading exam read out loud is the only way to access the material. Since this would probably be the student's usual way of working, exam boards are more likely to allow this, but in these cases, this would be noted as a **modification** of the paper.

In this interview, Mary Burzminski, the Cambridge Examinations Exams Centre Exams Manager in Geneva, Switzerland, outlines the policy of her exam board:

RH: What do Cambridge offer for learners with special educational needs and disabilities in terms of exam procedures?

MB: That's a very vast area because in fact Cambridge can accept any special need, so we can have anything from a simple demand for extra time which could be, for example, an extra 25% or more to help learners with dyslexia or dyspraxia, to using Braille reading papers or a Braille keyboard on a computer if needed. There are so many demands in between as well: people with hearing difficulties, for example, may

need to lip read a listening test that is read to them. We have also had cases where people were exempt from the listening test if necessary.

RH: Do you often have students asking for special measures?

MB: Yes, we do.

RH: What sort of things do they ask for?

MB: For the most part, here in Geneva, it's for extra time. I think there's more of an awareness now concerning dyslexia and dyspraxia for example, and people realize now that there's a need for extra time for some students. We also have occasional candidates who are visually impaired, who need Braille papers and/or a special programme on their computers.

RH: Do you also provide scribes and readers?

MB: Once again, if a medical certificate says this is what is needed for a particular candidate then we provide it.

RH: What does a candidate do to get these changes?

MB: They have to provide us with a medical certificate as each centre must then give that information to Cambridge who then approves it or not. We cannot just give extra time at our own will, the medical certificate must be approved by Cambridge.

RH: What exactly do you mean by this medical certificate that is needed?

MB: A certificate provided by a medical doctor describing the condition and the needs. This could also be is a detailed document produced by an educational psychologist or equivalent, it differs slightly from country to country, for example in nearby France many younger students will be sent to see a speech therapist before being referred to an educational psychologist. The important thing is to have a student's needs correctly identified by a qualified person, then the Cambridge Exam Centre can offer necessary assistance.

RH: Does that mean they would have to provide this information earlier?

MB: If the request is for modified papers, we may need the medical certificate up to 6 months before the exam date. For other requests we would need the medical certificate by the entry deadline.

RH: How does it work practically? If someone needs extra time, are they in the same hall for a paper and stay behind when others leave?

MB: For the most part we do it that way, because often we find students don't actually need the extra time, but it's available if they need it, and as in general students leave the hall when they've finished a paper it doesn't make any difference. In fact our experience has shown that often we would provide separate invigilation for students who actually left before the others in the main hall. The candidates are not made to feel excluded from the general procedure or separated from their classmates if they are in the same exam room. We do however offer separate rooms for students who have medical certificates mentioning phobias of large areas, use of computer, etc.

For more details of what Cambridge offers candidates check out http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/help/special-requirements/

Other examination boards offer similar services, for example:
Trinity- http://www.trinitycollege.com/site/?id=2933,

IELTS- https://www.ielts.org/book-a-test/special-requirements/learning-difficulties

TOIC-https://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/TOEIC/pdf/test_taker_disability_guidelines.pdf

TOEFL- https://www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/register/disabilities

Terminology, Top Tips & Resources - Anne Margaret Smith

This regular section will provide a brief explanation of some of the terminology used in the field of Inclusive Practices and Special Educational Needs – if you have a term you would like us to look into then please contact us at ipsensig@iatefl.org.

Dysgraphia

This is the term denoting extreme difficulty in producing written work, especially if there are no other difficulties experienced. In the UK (and other English-speaking countries) it is rarely given as a formal diagnosis, because difficulties in writing legibly are usually put down to issues around spatial awareness or fine-motor control (in which case dyspraxia is usually identified) and difficulties in generating text that is accurate in terms of spelling and grammar are usually assumed to be indicators of dyslexia. However, if a person is assessed and found not to exhibit any other dyslexia- or dyspraxia-type difficulties, but the only area of difficulty is producing text by hand, then a diagnosis of **dysgraphia** may be given.

It may be that using a keyboard to produce text is the immediate answer for many people who have **dysgraphia**, or even using speech-text software. There are many resources available (see the *Tips and Resources* section) for those who wish to try to develop better handwriting skills, and any activities that develop fine-motor control and spatial awareness are likely to be beneficial.

Top Tips & Resources

In this section we will be taking a regular look at easy-to-implement ideas for helping your students in the classroom. If you're looking for solutions for a specific issue, then please get in touch at ipsensig@iatefl.org.

Link two elastic bands together and loop one around the writing hand. Loop the other around the top of the pen/cil, to keep it in the correct position when writing.

With a light pencil, faintly rule in some extra lines halfway between the printed lines on the paper. You could even just use a dotted line. This gives the writer a better sense of where the top of the body of the letter should be. Stalks up should fill the whole space, and stalks down should extend to the middle of the line below.

Changing the pen/cil the writer is using can have a dramatic effect on neatness. Some people prefer a bigger, chunkier pen, others prefer a

narrower, finer pen. It is worth trying out different media, too (e.g. felt tips, ball points, gel pens or even fountain pens with metal nibs) to see which work best for each student. If the student finds a pen they like but they don't like the shape of it, a pencil grip can be used to alter the feel. These can be triangular, or ergonomic, to hold the fingers in the correct shape, or any other shape that the student likes. There are even grips to help left-handers write more neatly.

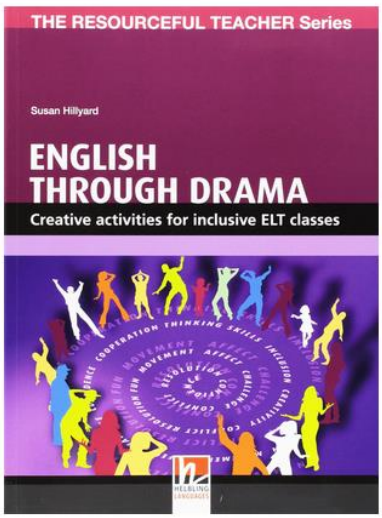
Many students find it easier to write on a slope, which supports the wrist and allows the writer to see the emerging text. The old-fashioned wooden school desks were sloped for this reason, but nowadays we almost always have flat tables in classrooms. However, students can rest on a lever-arch file, or even use a commercially-produced writing slope for this purpose.

Resources:
Pencil grips, writing slopes, handwriting sheets can be bought from www.teachhandwriting.co.uk/handwriting-resources-children.html and www.crossboweducation.com/handwriting-resources

There is more information about the benefits of developing handwriting, courses for teachers and research articles on this topic from the National Handwriting Association:
www.nha-handwriting.org.uk

Book Review - Rachael Harris

Susan Hillyard (2016) English Through Drama: Creative activities for inclusive ELT classes Helbling Languages (The resourceful teacher series) 196 pages. ISBN 978-3-99045-409-1



As Susan herself points out, education ministries throughout the world are bringing in English language teaching from an earlier and earlier age, meaning that ELT teachers must develop and use methods for teaching a larger variety of students than previously. These education systems are generally taking up the call for inclusive practices to a certain extent and language teachers are expected to follow suit, whether they have the necessary training or not. This is where books like this one come in useful.

The introduction provides a rationale on teaching drama in the ELT classroom based on research from a variety of sources. It goes on to cite the various advantages on teaching drama to SEN students such as increasing self-esteem and encouraging communication.

After a thorough introduction, rather than leaping in with a pile of activity ideas, Susan broaches the subject of behavior management, which is probably the main barrier for many teachers unsure about whether to use drama in their class. We worry that drama activities will lead to chaos and Susan reassures us by answering questions such as "how can I make sure students behave well in class?" as well as providing a dos and don'ts summary of basic classroom management techniques such as giving the instructions about group/pair work after you have given the actual task, to avoid students rushing to find their preferred partner rather than listening to what they have to do.

The next six sections provide a selection of increasingly longer and more challenging activities, starting with breathing or mime activities that last between five and fifteen minutes – these exercises could be used to finish a longer lesson for example, or as a drama taster before trying something longer. The following section deals with vocal activities, all designed to practice speaking in a non-judgmental environment.

The well-being aspect of these activities needs no more explanation,

however we mustn't forget the language input, and Susan includes activities such as a take on Kim's game that provide direct vocabulary revision. The final section of the second chapter provides a bank of more challenging fluency exercises suitable for students who are intermediate or above.

Chapter three provides the reader with 6 complete and detailed lesson plans which can be used directly in class. Each one includes information on the language focus, level, suitable age, time, and necessary preparation – essential details for the busy teacher and a great idea for any substitute work.

The final chapter offers eight complete mini-scripts as well as information on how to choose a suitable script and how to adapt them, as well as ideas for creating your own scripts from stories you use in class.

In this book Susan Hillyard seems to have succeeded in the delicate balancing act that many teachers require – that of providing both theory and research, along with practical tips and ideas. The ideas are explained in enough detail to be used by the most hesitant teacher, and can be easily adapted by teachers wanting a more personalized approach. I particularly appreciate the lack of material needed for a lot of the activities, in a time when teachers seem to spend most of their life at the photocopier, it's a relief to be able to walk into a class with just this book and still provide students with a chance to learn and create together without weighing down oneself or the students with papers.

If you would like to review a book you have appreciated, or would like to receive a free copy of a book you would like to read and review, then please contact us at ipsensig@iatefl.org

CALL FOR ARTICLES

The IATEFL IP&SEN SIG invites the submission of original articles on various aspects of inclusive practice in English language teaching of both young learners and adults, including, but not restricted to research, methodology, lesson ideas, teaching materials and other resources. Reviews of books, webinars, courses etc. on this theme are also welcome.

Submissions may be in any of these formats:

- **Full-length articles**: Articles should not exceed 2,500 words but may be shorter, including references.
- **Shorter articles**: Articles should not exceed 1000 words but may be shorter, including references.
- **Reviews**: between 500-800 words, including references.

All manuscripts for the above categories should be printed across A4 pages upright and left justified, as Word document in a black, 12-point font of your choice. Please do not use columns or have hyphenated words at the line end. Diagrams should be formatted in Word (other illustrative material should be sent separately by mail).

Please do not use headers or footers. Please use the Harvard referencing system.
(https://education.exeter.ac.uk/dll/studyskills/harvard_referencing.htm)

All articles must be original. Articles that have already been published elsewhere, even in a slightly different form, cannot be accepted.

The Editors reserve the right to make changes without prior consultation with the author(s). Authors will be contacted regarding any major editing or revisions. All contributors will receive a complimentary copy of the IP&SEN SIG newsletter.

Please send submissions, as a Word document by email attachment, to the attention of the Newsletter Editor at ipsensig@iatefl.org. Please include:

- a short biography (50 words)
- a photo (headshot of yourself)
- your postal address (so that we can send you a hard copy of the edition with your article in it)

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