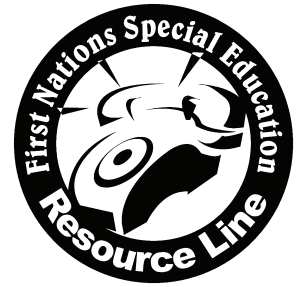


# First Nations Special Education CONNECTIONS



Newsletter of the First Nations Special Education Toll-free Resource Line

Vol. 11, No. 2 December 2010

## Working with First Nations students in BC?

Have special education questions?

## Call the Resource Line!

The Resource Line is a free service for BC educators and parents.

It can help you brainstorm approaches, guide you toward helpful resources, help you to understand assessment documents, and let you know about the latest information on special education.

When you call or email, you will reach the Resource Line Coordinator, Holly Smith. Holly is available to answer your questions, Monday to Thursday, 12:30 to 4:30 during the school year.

Holly also travels throughout the province offering in-school support, so if she is away when you call, she will follow-up as soon as possible upon her return.

### Contact the Resource Line:

Toll-free 1-877-547-1919

[hollys@fnesc.ca](mailto:hollys@fnesc.ca)

*Connections* is the monthly newsletter of the Resource Line. Back issues of *Connections* are available from:

[www.fnsc.ca/resource-line.htm](http://www.fnsc.ca/resource-line.htm)

The Resource Line is a collaborative project of the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the First Nations Schools Association (FNSA), made possible thanks to financial assistance from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.



*Did you know that the Special Education Resource and the Speech and Language Toll-Free Lines are also available to parents? You can share the phone and email contacts for the Resource Lines with families in your community. Deanne and Holly can help parents work successfully with their children's school, develop advocacy skills, learn about resources, and provide information on many other topics.*

*These services are available to families of First Nations students in First Nations schools, public schools and independent schools.*

*Holly Smith, Special Education Resource Line,  
Toll-free: 1-877-547-1919 Email: [hollys@fnesc.ca](mailto:hollys@fnesc.ca)*

*Deanne Zeidler, Speech and Language Resource Line,  
Toll-free: 1-877-547-5926 Email: [deannez@fnesc.ca](mailto:deannez@fnesc.ca)*

## Enlightening Articles

### Building an Effective Classroom Climate

***Excerpt from Putting the Pieces Together: Building a Curriculum of Caring, a manual by Stacey Burnard***

Today's teacher cannot begin with rules but rather must provide "rituals of connections." In order to provide moral leadership and connection, teachers must:

- Be healthy ourselves. In working with young people, one's own reaction to the youth is as important and revealing as one's own pedagogical leaning. Accordingly we must examine our own lives and internalized biases to reach an emotionally-deprived child and provide a safe school;
- Believe in our purpose to serve the needs of the child as a result of a moral commitment to the child. This commitment is rooted in the awareness of the needs of children and our belief about the significance of our roles as teachers in their lives;
- Build communities within our classrooms through a lens of democracy, open communication and collaboration. We must provide a participative environment within a framework developed

with the wisdom we have acquired through our own personal development. As the elder in the room we must permit participation in decision-making but within a set decision tree, otherwise we would not be employing our wisdom in guiding our youth;

- Develop a supportive environment for trust, safety and relationship-building to occur.

Rogierian psychology (1951) states that in order to be an effective therapist, one must be genuine or authentic, and one must provide empathy and unconditional positive regard and acceptance for another. The same could be said of the effective teacher. Once one believes in the inner goodness of people and children's desire to contribute, then one can provide positive regard by being genuinely interested in students. From there, one can build trust through offering understanding.

It is often the small interactions that are the most important. For example, meeting kids at the classroom door, saying goodbye at the end of day, walking the halls and asking questions about their lives are simple ways to create connection. Another example is the use of a "talking circle" in the classroom. That is, each morning the class can sit in a circle and respond to questions such as "How are you feeling?," "What are you looking forward to today?," and "Provide a compliment to a member of the class." It is critical to connectedness and relationship building to "collect" the students at the beginning of the day and at the end of the day.

Connecting with adult-wary kids requires providing a fail-safe relationship wherein the teacher must demonstrate that she or he will always be there. There must be the belief and understanding on the part of the teacher that nothing productive will occur in the classroom without belongingness as a basis. Teachers who show love and respect for their students and their opinions, use non-coercive discipline and rely on reasoning and explanation in discipline, foster positive social development.

The classroom must also promote the value of "otherness." Explanations of the impact of behavior on others are critical in developing empathy and moral and social reasoning.

Teachers need to encourage risk-taking with their students. We can only build resilience in our youth through empowerment. In a safe, supportive environment children can pursue their potentials through questioning, discovery and curiosity. Our relationships with them will reveal their individual needs and interests, which can then be manifested in their work and projects.

*Stacey Burnard is a behavioural specialist with appearances on CBC radio and publications in CrossCurrents, and SNAP and presentations at the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders in the*

*United States and throughout BC and the Yukon. To reach Stacey and to order copies of her manual, contact her at P: 867-335-1717 or [stacey.burnard3@gmail.com](mailto:stacey.burnard3@gmail.com).*

## Processing Speed

**By Dr. A. Lynne Beal, Psychologist**

**Excerpted from the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario Website**

<http://tinyurl.com/2998cut>

Processing Speed is one of the measures of cognitive efficiency or cognitive proficiency. It involves the ability to automatically and fluently perform relatively easy or over-learned cognitive tasks, especially when high mental efficiency is required. That is, for simple tasks requiring attention and focused concentration. It relates to the ability to process information automatically and therefore speedily, without intentional thinking through.

A student with processing speed needs has difficulty performing simple cognitive tasks fluently and automatically, especially when focused concentration is required.

### Indicators

The key indicators of processing speed relate to the time and speed taken to perform tasks.

Students with processing speed needs may take more time to:

- recognize simple visual patterns and in visual scanning tasks;
- take tests that require simple decision-making;
- perform basic arithmetic calculations and manipulate numbers, since these operations are not automatic for them;
- perform reasoning tasks under time pressure;
- make decisions that require understanding of the material presented;
- read silently for comprehension; and
- copy words or sentences correctly or formulate and write passages.

### Instructional Strategies

The key instructional strategy for students with slow processing speed is to reduce the time pressure associated with a task. This can be done in three essential ways.

- Allow longer response time for the student to
  - respond orally to questions in class;
  - complete seatwork assignments in class;

- and
  - make decisions when offered a choice of activities.
- Allow extra time for tests, usually time and a half.
- Provide extra time for the student to complete in-class assignments.
- Reduce the amount of work the student is required to do.
- Shorten the assignment so it can be accomplished within the time allotted.
- Focus on quality of productions, rather than quantity.
- Shorten drill and practice assignments that have a written component by requiring fewer repetitions of each concept.
- Provide copies of notes rather than requiring the student to copy from the board in a limited time.
- Build the student's efficiency in completing work through building automaticity.
- Provide instruction to increase the student's reading speed by training reading fluency, ability to recognize common letter sequences automatically that are used in print; and sight vocabulary.
- Provide timed activities to build speed and automaticity with basic skills, such as:
  - reading a list of high-frequency words as fast as possible;
  - calculating simple math facts as fast as possible;
  - learning simple math calculations through flash cards and educational software exercises; and
  - charting daily performance for speed and accuracy.
- Train the student in time management techniques to become aware of the time that tasks take.
- Teach the student to use a stopwatch or to record his or her start and end times for assignments to monitor the time spent on each activity. Set a goal for the student to gradually reduce the time needed to do these tasks.

### Assessment Strategies

Assessment strategies emphasize power tests that focus on the knowledge the student has, rather than on speed tests to complete a large number of questions within a limited time.

- Emphasize accuracy rather than speed in

evaluating the student in all subject areas.

- Replace timed tests with alternative assessment procedures.
- Allow extra time for tests and exams. Give the student supervised breaks during the test.
- Provide a reader or text-to-voice software to read test questions to the student to accommodate for slow reading fluency.
- Provide a scribe or voice-to-text software to record the student's answers on tests to accommodate for slow writing fluency.
- Use test formats with reduced written output formats (e.g. multiple choice, True / False, fill in the blank) to accommodate for slow writing fluency.

## Classroom Resources



First Nations schools – do you have students who would benefit from having their curriculum resources in alternate formats, such as talking books or electronic text?

Through an arrangement with the First Nations Education Steering Committee and the First Nations Schools Association, you can access a huge collection of “alternate format” materials from Accessible Resource Centre – British Columbia (ARC-BC).

To access ARC-BC Resources, contact Holly Smith, FNEESC/FNSA Special Education Resources Coordinator, Toll-free: 1-877-547-1919 [hollys@fnesc.ca](mailto:hollys@fnesc.ca)

### What is ARC-BC?

The Accessible Resource Centre – British Columbia is a BC Ministry of Education response to the increasing demand for digital or alternate format alternatives to print. The goal of ARC-BC is to provide BC students with perceptual disabilities and the educators supporting them with high-quality digital alternate format materials based on the BC K-12 curriculum.

ARC-BC is jointly managed by SET-BC (Special Education Technology – British Columbia) and the Provincial Centre for the Visually Impaired. ARC works in consultation and partnership with BC school districts, other alternate format producers, and publishers to provide recommended and requested materials.

Access to ARC-BC is limited to registered users only. Registration is available to those individuals in participating BC First Nations schools who are educators who are currently supporting students with a perceptual disability.

## Useful Websites



### Talk Box

<http://tinyurl.com/2btsxvu>

Talk Box is a new, free resource that is available on the Internet. It is packed with information and activities to promote children's speech and language development. Talk Box was developed by Speech Language Pathologists to provide families with ideas for creating language-rich environments everywhere, every day and every way!

The Talk Box website consists of information that you can download to create two resource boxes for families and their children to provide ideas that support the development of language and communication skills. One box is for preschool children from birth to 5 years and one box is for school-aged children from 5 to 12 years. The site provides directions for organizing resources in a plastic file tote.

#### Preschool Talk Box Resources

- Toy Cards: How to use toys to learn language
- Monthly Activities: Fun activities to help children learn language
- Newsletters, Talking and Listening checklist, or the Speech Sounds Checklist - How well is your child talking?

#### School Age Talk Box Resources

- Good Times with Game: Games that help your child learn
- Newsletters, or the Speech Sounds Checklist: How well your child is talking?

#### Additional speech-language resources.

- Creating Language-Rich Environments: A Facilitator's Guide of Workshop Activities

Materials are available free for downloading.

### SMART Board Online Resources

Is your school using SMART Board technology? Check out these websites for lessons and professional development opportunities.

#### SMART Exchange

<http://tinyurl.com/299emek>

Find lessons for your SMART Board and connect with other teachers. You can browse by subject, grade and

file type. You can also share lessons that you have created.

### Blossom Learning

[www.blossomlearning.com](http://www.blossomlearning.com)

Winner of the Scholastic Administrator Best in Technology Award for 2010, Blossom Learning offers a quality online professional development for teachers who want to get the most out of their SMART Board. View sample videos of their course, share ideas and resources in the online community.

## Mark Your Calendars

### JANUARY 2011

**January 21-22, Vancouver.** Adult Educators' Provincial Specialist Association (AEPSA) 15th Annual Conference and AGM. Dealing with Neurodiversity, Addiction and Mental Health Challenges in Adult Students. Keynote: Robert Aitken, VCC  
[www.bctf.ca/aepsa](http://www.bctf.ca/aepsa) or contact [psac74@bctf.ca](mailto:psac74@bctf.ca)

### FEBRUARY 2011

**February 18, Victoria.** Organizing Strategies to Prepare for Homework and the Real World - An Interdisciplinary Treatment Approach. Organizational skills are a set of executive functioning skills that can be overwhelming tasks for even our most intellectually sharp students with social cognitive deficits. This workshop will explore two different types of organizational skills: static and dynamic and break apart the concept of dynamic organizational skills into 10 concrete steps. <http://www.actcommunity.net/>

**February 24-25, Duncan.** Rapid Recovery Techniques For Depression & Low Self-Esteem Dr. Burns will illustrate treatment innovations that focus on five vitally important areas: assessment, empathy, motivation, technique, and the structure of the treatment itself. He will illustrate how to treat patients with unipolar and bipolar mood disorders and will bring these new methods to life with live demonstrations with audience volunteers. For more information <http://tiny.cc/92a05>

### MARCH 2011

**March 17-18, Vancouver.** The Special Education Association (SEA) is proud to present the 36th Annual Crosscurrents Conference at the Westin Bayshore Hotel in Vancouver. Keynote: Dr. Paula Kluth plus a variety of quality sessions and exhibitors for regular and special education. For information, visit the website at [www.bctf.ca/sea](http://www.bctf.ca/sea) or contact Conference Chair Leann Buteau [lbuteau@gmail.com](mailto:lbuteau@gmail.com)