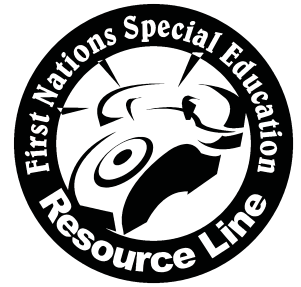


First Nations Special Education CONNECTIONS



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

Vol. 10, No. 1 Sept. 2009

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

Contact the Resource Line:

Toll-free 1-877-547-1919

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

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.



Welcome back! The start of a new school year is always an exciting and busy time. It's an opportunity to start with fresh ideas to enable your students to experience success!

I look forward to hearing from you this school year. My role is to help you locate program resources, brainstorm strategies, and explain the Learning Plan process.

Wishing you all the best this September!

Holly Smith

Special Education Resource Line Coordinator

Useful Connections

First Nations schools, be sure to bookmark the First Nations Schools Association website at www.fnsc.ca/specialed.htm for the latest information on Special Education Program (SEP) Funding Applications and Reporting, and FNESC/FNSA SEP Services including SET-BC, Speech Language Pathology, Psycho-Educational Assessments, Specialist Supports, Resource Lines, Lending Library and Professional Development Opportunities.

The **First Nations Speech and Language Resource Line** is a free service connecting teachers, administrators, parents, and service providers to the information they need to support First Nations students with speech language needs. Call Deanne Zeidler toll-free at 1-877-547-5926.

The **First Nations Special Education Resource Line**, which brings you *Connections*, helps teachers, administrators, parents, and service providers find the information they need to support First Nations students with special education needs. Call Holly Smith toll-free at 1-877- 547-1919.

The **FNESC Special Education Consultants**, Madeline Price and Holly Smith, travel to First Nations schools in BC, upon request, to provide free support in many different areas according to schools' needs. Email madelinep@fnesc.ca or hollys@fnesc.ca for an outline of workshops, assessments, consults and other services to support your classroom and school needs.

Enlightening Reading

Teaching Oral Language

By Guest Contributor: Ben Perry, FNESC/FNSA Speech/Language Therapist, benp@fnesc.ca

BEN PERRY joined FNESC in 2007 after graduating from the Speech and Hearing Science program at UBC. He has a background in ESL and linguistics. Ben provides consultative SLP services to FNSA schools around the province. Ben is submitting a series of articles to Connections on Teaching Oral Language.

As a school-based speech and language therapist, I see many children who need help developing their oral language abilities. Although they would benefit from working with a specialist, many of these students don't need focused intervention. What they do need is a rich language environment and the support of an adult who listens and models the language they will need for school success.

Teachers strive to do this in the classroom. Teachers often speak in a different voice and rhythm than the rest of the population, they take the time to explain words and concepts, they get down to their students' level, and strive to understand what their students are trying to say. There are good reasons for paying such attention to oral language – oral language ability is important for learning, socializing, and of course, literacy. In my work, it seems that teachers have a significant potential for making an impact on their students' oral language, so I decided to write a series of articles for teachers about teaching oral language.

The term "oral" is used in order to describe a natural human ability. Speaking and listening are the most natural mediums for language – they are instinctive and start to develop at birth and even before. However, unlike many instincts, language relies on "teachers" in order to fully develop. Our first teachers are our caregivers who talk to us and listen to us. As babies, we babble and learn to make sounds with our mouths. Babies begin to learn the meanings of words before their first birthday. Before a child says their first word, they likely understand 100 words or more. Children have an incredible capacity for learning the meanings of words – they only need to hear it once in order to learn it. By the time a child is ready for school, they know thousands of words and also how to combine them into sentences and phrases. This is an impressive task relying on a collaboration between the powerful instincts of the child and the words provided by caregivers.

However, things can go wrong with this process. Children can be born with a disability that impairs their ability to develop language; caregivers might not be able to provide enough language interaction for the child; and children may come to school with little language experience, which makes it difficult for

them to learn. They are, in a sense, not ready for the demands school places on them. Some data suggest that this is a particular problem in First Nations communities. There are a number of explanations for this, not the least of which is the history of First Peoples and their languages under colonization.

One explanation for this difference is that these students don't actually have low language ability; they simply speak a different dialect. As with Lumbee English in the United States, First Peoples in Canada may speak English that is different from Standard English. A dialect may include different grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and even styles of communication. Dialect is not an inferior form of standard English, but an equal and different version. Often dialects are influenced by the original language of a community – and so might be important remnants of the original community language.

Nonetheless, dialect poses a challenge for education because educational materials (in particular reading materials) are rarely in the local dialect, and often teachers also don't speak the local dialect. This has led to some educational organizations, including the BC Ministry of Education, to include English as a Second Dialect (ESD) as part of their English as a Second Language policy. A student with a non-standard dialect not only faces the difficulty of using different words and sentences, but also the different cultural values that come with different dialects. This means that we need to pay attention to how we go about teaching the Standard English dialect and value the local dialect of English. By teaching students about language difference, we allow them to value their community's way of speaking while still learning the valuable Standard English dialect.

Between the need for teaching the standard dialect and the possible high incidence of language delay in First Nations communities, it makes sense to pay some attention to the oral language development of First Nations students. In particular, since it is one of the main foundations of successful learning, we need to work on this early, and possibly first, before other educational goals are approached. This is not a new idea. A wide variety of early intervention programs for language have been developed for this very purpose.

NEXT MONTH: An overview of interventions and resources useful in supporting oral language development in the classroom.

REFERENCES:

1. For more see Pinker, Steven (1994). *The Language Instinct*. New York: Harper Collins.
2. Public Health Agency of Canada. (2001). *Aboriginal Head Start: Program and Participants 2001*. Retrieved from http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dca-dea/publications/ahs_program2001-eng.php
3. Lumbee is a dialect of English spoken by the Lumbee Indian Tribe in North Carolina
4. Ball, J. & Bernhardt, B. (2005). Implications of First Nations English dialects for supporting children's language development. Paper presented at the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education, Hamilton, Aotearoa New Zealand, November 27-December 1.
5. BC Ministry of Education (2009). *English as a Second Language Policy Guidelines*. Retrieved from <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/esl/policy/guidelines.pdf>

“START UP” Learning Plan Brain Blasts

By Madeline Price, Special Education Consultant, madelinep@fnesc.ca

Every student can benefit from a Learning Plan. Learning Plans work from students’ strengths and support their areas of need. Properly implemented Learning Plans set students up for success.

- Start a Learning Plan Calendar with dates for meetings and reviews in September. If this seems overwhelming, prioritize by student need.
- Learning Plans measure progress. *These are on-going measures that teachers use every day... not formal assessments.*

Suggestions for measuring progress:

- baseline measure chart (included in FNEsc Learning Plan)
- words per minute chart/reading fluency chart
- reading levels chart
- math levels chart
- unit tests
- attendance/late chart
- copies of “before” and “after” student work
- ongoing observational recording
- running records ex. Jerry Johns/PM Benchmarks
- frequently used word lists - words per minute
- BC Performance Standards

Progress is what it is all about! We don’t all have to progress at the same rate. But we all have the right to progress at our own rate! Progress Rocks!

Useful Websites



<http://bookwizard.scholastic.com/tbw/homePage.do>

Scholastic has brought out a new tool to help teachers level books instantly. The Teacher Book Wizard has a database of over 50,000 children’s books from all publishers and a selection of teaching resources for individual books. You can use the leveled search to find books just right for each student or use the BookAlike feature to find similar books to one your students enjoyed. Take a book wizard tour to learn all the features available. You can download the the Teacher Book Wizard widget to your desktop for free.



www.setbc.org/

Some things to look for on the SET-BC website www.setbc.org/:

- **CurriculumSET** – downloadable activities to support the curriculum in programs such as Clicker 5 and IntelliTools Classroom Suite
- **PictureSET** – activities for communication, downloadable in either Boardmaker or in PDF format
- **Accessible Books** – a listing of over 500 children’s books that have been scanned and recorded into PowerPoint and other programs, allowing students to ‘read’ the stories on their computer. If a school owns the print copy of a book, SET-BC will send you a CD with the Accessible Book version free of charge
- **The Provincial Software Acquisition Project (PSAP)** – where schools in BC can purchase selected educational software at a much-reduced rate
- **The Learning Centre** – provides a wealth of classroom resources and training modules on assistive technology. You’ll find video demonstrations, downloadable tipsheets and other resources to help you

to implement technology with your students. This is especially helpful if you want to know more about programs you plan to implement this year, such as Boardmaker and Clicker 5

- **Upcoming Events** – check for free online learning sessions and upcoming workshops in your region
- **Virtual Voices Village** – a place for students with disabilities to share their ideas and participate in projects and contests. There is always something exciting happening here! Check out Virtual Voices Contests and the two Gold winners from Haahuupayak School in the Community Reporting Contest! Congratulations Leo and Latrell! <http://www.vvillage.org/contests/09community/entries.shtml>

Mark Your Calendars

Special Education Program (SEP) Deadlines for First Nations schools

- *SEP Information Confirmation Form* **September 16, 2009**
- *Psycho-Educational Assessment Applications* **October 2, 2009**
- *SET-BC Application Second Round* **October 2, 2009**
- *High Cost Funding Applications* **October 9, 2009**
- *SEP Work Plan* **October 9, 2009**

SEP documents are available online at www.fnsa.ca/specialed.htm If you need further information, contact Curtis Mallett or Barb O'Neill at (604) 925-6087 or 1-877-422-3672.

September 28, Moricetown. *Step Up To Writing* - research-based, validated strategies and activities that help students write narrative, personal narrative, and expository pieces; actively engage in reading materials for improved comprehension; and demonstrate competent study skills. Presented by Madeline Price, FNEC Special Education Consultant. For more information contact Val or Laura at Moricetown Elementary School 250-847-3166.

October 2-3, Vancouver. *Learners on the Autism Spectrum-Creating a Culture of Inclusion through Designing Peer Play and Friendship Programs* presented by Pamela Wolfberg and Heather McCracken at SFU Vancouver Harbour Centre. This specialized two-day seminar is designed to prepare participants to carry out the practices of the Integrated Play Groups (IPG) model for children and teens. Register on-line at www.friend2friendsociety.org For more information email friend2friend@shaw.ca or call 604-528-0560.

October 2-3, Vancouver. *Motivating Minds with SmartLearning Conference.* Susan Close and the SmartLearning facilitators have focused their attention this past year integrating the latest brain research and learning with the approach and tools for SmartLearning. Check out the details at www.susanclose.ca or contact Joey Sahli, Conference Coordinator 778-988-3145 jsahli1@telus.net

October 21-23, Fort Nelson. Fort Nelson District Teachers' Association presents *Fred Jones: Tools for Teaching (Discipline*Instruction*Motivation)*, Please contact Amanda Morris at amorris@sd81.bc.ca for additional information and registration form. For additional information on Fred Jones, visit his website at <http://www.fredjones.com>.

October 22-23, Richmond. BCTLA hosts the *Champions of Literacy Conference.* Imagination-Information-Innovation. Keynote: Roch Carrier, a national treasure and a champion of Canadian culture. For more information: <http://bctf.ca/bctla/conference/index.html>.

October 22-24 Burnaby. BCTELA hosts the *2009 National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Northwest Regional Conference.* The conference theme is *Asking the Right Questions: Engaging today's learners.* Featuring: Jeff Wilhelm, Carol Jago, Faye Brownlie, David Booth, Beverly Ann Chin, Kathleen Gregory, Sharon Jeroski, Carl Leggo, John Golden, Shelly Stagg Peterson, Susan Close & Sue Montabello. To register: www.bctela.ca

October 22-24, Whistler. BCAMT hosts the *2009 Northwest Mathematics Conference* at the Fairmont Chateau and Westin Resort in Whistler. Conference theme is *Going for Gold: Let the Mathematics Begin.* Keynotes: Trevor Calkins, Carole Saundry, and Peter Liljedahl. Conference includes an NCTM Learn & Reflect Strand and a Teachers Teaching with Technology regional conference. For more information go to www.bctf.ca/bcamt/nw2009.

October 23, Burnaby. SRCLE is hosting the *ENCOMPASS Social Responsibility, Social and Emotional Learning, and Social Justice Conference* at Burnaby Mountain Secondary School. Michele Borba is the keynote speaker. Cost: \$40. For details visit <http://srcle.net/>.

October 23, Burnaby. *Learning Assistance Teachers' Association Conference* will be held at the Holiday Inn Metrotown. Topic: *Why Math is Failing Our Children*. Shad Moarif (Ed.M, Harvard.) Shad is the founder of Karismath formerly known as CLSO-MATH which is guided by the principles of Universal Design for Learning. For more information contact Alan Peterson at lataconference@hotmail.com

October 23, Vancouver. The *Association for Educators of Gifted, Talented and Creative Children in BC* presents *Dr. Joanne Foster* of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, co-author of the award-winning *Being Smart About Gifted Children* (2005), and the second edition *Being Smart About Gifted Education* (2009). All educators, administrators, gifted program facilitators, advocacy group members and parents are welcome. For conference details and registration information, go to www.aegtcabc.org.

October 23, Vancouver. *Speaking of Kids Conference 2009* will feature special guest Marlee Matlin addressing the issue regarding diversity, followed by a book signing session. Dr. Lee Gunderson will be speaking about 'Smart But Stuck' - Is it a Reading Problem or a Language Problem? For more information, visit <http://www.ldav.ca/>.

October 23-24, Abbotsford. *BCPTA Primary Leadership Conference*, with Friday Keynote Concert by Charlotte Diamond "The Joy of Singing Leads to a Love of Language." Presentations across the curriculum by popular speakers and classroom primary teachers. Final details and online registration will be on the BCPTA website www.bctf.ca/bcpta Registrar: Sandra Huggett shuggett@sd57.bc.ca

October 23-24, Surrey. *PITA Fall Conference, Growing Ideas*, featuring over 60 workshops in literacy, math, science, social studies, physical education, and so on. For details and registration, visit www.pita.ca or contact Ray Myrtle president@pita.ca

Looking to bring a special education workshop to your school? Visit these websites for ideas...

FNESC/FNSA Special Education Resource Team <http://www.fnsa.ca/specialed.htm>

BC Teachers' Federation Professional Development Resource People
<http://bctf.ca/ProfessionalDevelopment.aspx?id=15540>

University of Victoria Professional Development Bookings
<http://www.uvcs.uvic.ca/csie/faq-prod.aspx#2>

Be sure to check out the *Connections* Professional Development Issue on the FNSA website
<http://www.fnsa.ca/specialed.htm>