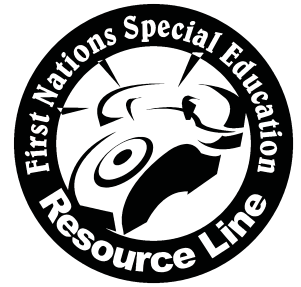


# First Nations Special Education CONNECTIONS



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

Vol. 10, No. 2

Oct. 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](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.



*Remember to keep the phone calls and emails coming! My role is to assist staff and parents with brainstorming resources and approaches to increase student learning and achievement. I can also help with interpreting assessment documents. Call me toll-free at 1-877-547-1919, or email me at [hollys@fnesc.ca](mailto:hollys@fnesc.ca).*

*Holly Smith*

*Special Education Resource Line Coordinator*

## Enlightening Reading

### Supporting High School Graduation Through Adaptations in School & Provincial Exams "Adjudication"

**By Guest Contributor: Madeline Price, FNESC Special Education Consultant**



What is "Adjudication"? Adjudication is support with exams through adaptations such as:

- extra time;
- use of computer word processing;
- use of spell check with word processing;
- use of voice activated software;
- use of scanning software (Kurzweil);
- use of reader or scribe; and/or
- larger print for visual impairments.

Some students may require these kinds of adaptations to show their knowledge successfully on school and provincial exams.

How do you know if your students qualify for these adaptations?

In most cases students will need a Psycho-Educational Assessment or an Achievement Assessment to show the areas that they will need to be supported in. In all cases, these students require an Individual Education Plan outlining their areas of adaptation and a summary of the formal assessment that has been administered.



Exam adjudication can ensure students get the support they need to graduate with the best marks possible. To learn more about this process please email or phone:

Madeline Price  
FNEsc Special Education

Consultant  
madelinep@fnesc.ca 6 04-290-1282

Holly Smith Special Education Resource Person /  
Toll-Free Resource Line Coordinator  
hollys@fnesc.ca 1-877-547-1919

Madeline and Holly are available to lead a workshop at your school to outline the adjudication and assessment process that could make a big difference to student achievement.

## Teaching Oral Language

### By Guest Contributor: Ben Perry, FNEsc/FNSA Speech/Language Therapist

Last month, I discussed how teachers can have a big influence on students' language development and how classrooms are rich environments for early oral language development because teachers and students are in almost constant dialogue.

Students are also well-served if schools are equipped to provide a significant level of language intervention before a Speech Language Pathologist gets involved. What follows are basic descriptions of more types of interventions. Most of them will work best with a small group, and while the students with stronger language skills in the group may not need these interventions, they will still benefit and provide additional modeling.

#### *Language Stimulation*

Language stimulation is a next step after a rich oral language environment. In language stimulation, specific language goals such as a group of words (e.g. directions such as "up" and "down"), a type of sentence (e.g. past tense sentences), or a grammatical point (such as "s" at the end of verbs) are chosen as a target. This target is "stimulated" by saying it frequently during a rich oral language activity such as playing with toys or an interactive discussion with students. For example, you might play with a dollhouse and mention often that your doll is going "up" the stairs.

#### *Explicit Practice*

A contrasting method of oral language teaching would be to explicitly correct students' language in a controlled activity. Since the language target is often only a small part of the activity, this leaves room for all kinds of

creativity and fun. The teacher can prompt the students to use the correct form while also offering positive feedback and corrections. For example, you might be discussing a story with the students and suggest that they use "she" instead of "her" when telling about what someone did.

#### *Rich Vocabulary Teaching*

Students learn words best when words are given the attention they deserve. This should involve a good explanation, preferably in the context of a story, event, or something else that interests them. It should also involve an opportunity for the students to interact with the words orally. A good rule of thumb is that each new word should be repeated 20 times in a meaningful way during a vocabulary lesson. Attention should also be paid to which words are selected. Of course, basic words such as "dog" and "hamburger" don't need to be taught in this way, but neither do rare words such as "gladiolus" or "soffit". Try to focus on useful words in between these common and rare examples such as "hazardous" or "organize".

#### *Phonological Awareness*

Phonological awareness has been repeatedly shown to be one of the most effective interventions for early reading success. Phonological awareness involves the ability to break sentences and words into their individual parts, and to put words and sentences together from parts. These parts include syllables and individual speech sounds. This is the very skill that is used when sounding out a word during reading. It can be trained with or without text present, but early on, the text can confuse the process, so it is better to work on this skill orally. One of the earliest skills is identifying the first sound in a word – e.g. "mouse" starts with the "m" sound and "phone" starts with the "f" sound.

#### *Auditory Processing*

Auditory processing (AP) describes the ability to remember and analyze the sound of language. Strong AP lets us remember longer, more complicated bits of speech and process them faster. Good AP is important for comprehending both spoken and written language. Auditory processing can be improved through drills that involve remembering and organizing language. Auditory processing drills could involve quickly following directions, repeating words and sentences, and quickly answering questions. Working memory is an important component of Auditory Processing and there are now many schemes and some computer programs that target working memory.

#### *Programs and Kits*

There are several programs and kits available for targeting oral language. Some home-grown examples include Talking Tables, developed in the Prince Rupert School District, and SOLVD, a program developed

in the Kamloops area. Both are targeted towards early primary students and use real objects and communicative activities to practice oral language. Talking Tables involves a one-day training and the purchase of a kit, while SOLVD involves ongoing training and mentorship of a school staff member. These kits target vocabulary and auditory processing among other things. Talking Tables also targets phonological awareness.

### *Computer-Based Interventions*

There are several computer-based interventions that target oral language as well. These often focus on phonological awareness and auditory processing. Research has shown that they are beneficial, especially when used intensively. Some popular programs include Earobics, Laureate and FastForward.

I hope that some combination of these interventions will be useful for your students. In upcoming issues of *Connections*, I will go into more detail on how to carry out these interventions and please let me know if you have tips that you would like to share with others in the newsletter or by other means.

I welcome your comments and questions and you can contact me at [benp@fnesc.ca](mailto:benp@fnesc.ca)

## **Community Adult Literacy Benchmarks**

**By Guest Contributor Diane Mattson, Principal Kyah Wiget Adult Education Centre**

The Kyah Wiget Adult Learning Centre receives the Community Adult Literacy Program (CALP) grant from the Ministry of Advanced Education and this grant supports the work of the center. We offer an Adult Dogwood program in cooperation with School District #54, an Interdisciplinary Access program through Northwest Community College, and a tutorial support program for students upgrading to meet specific post-secondary requirements. We also function as an on-reserve site for students attending the Learning Center-part of Smithers Secondary School. Students use the computer lab and receive support as they complete assignments.

The CALP Benchmarks are grounded in a values-based approach to monitoring and assessment. The goal of an adult-based center is to increase learners' abilities to understand and apply skills and knowledge in the context of participation in family, work and community life. This community-based learning emphasizes success and achievement, not failures or deficits. The Benchmarks are intended as a guide for learning. They do not assume a standardized curriculum, but identify common skills and attitudes. The learner's goal provides the context of the curriculum; thus, students can be assessed as they work towards their Dogwood or as they work to upgrade skills for a trades course.

The Benchmarks are organized into six domains: reading, writing, oral communication, math, participation and information technology. Each domain is divided into four levels and is presented in an easy to use matrix. We have used the reading, writing and math domains in our assessments. We found that the scope of four levels too narrow. We choose to use a system that divides each domain into three levels: approaching, maintaining and exceeding (but not at the next level). A frustration is that in the final report only a level is reported. Some students moved within a level, but this was not recorded.

We have found the system easy to use and to administer. We are retired high school teachers and found this an exceptional method to assess adults. Literature selection was a newspaper article, a local story or a magazine article- whatever the person was interested in. The reading assessment was informal-talking and assessing the cognitive processes was as important as the content. A writing example was generated from the reading assessment. The math teacher began with a general review and practical activities. He then assigned a graduated group of problems for students to complete.

I collated the results and used them to provide "proof" of the learners' achievements as required on the CALP final report. As teachers we used the assessments to guide our teaching. We were able to accurately define student progress as we tailored courses to student need and interest.

The CALP Benchmarks are posted on Literacy BC's website:

[http://www.literacybc.ca/Research/MandA/Benchmarks\\_and\\_checklists.pdf](http://www.literacybc.ca/Research/MandA/Benchmarks_and_checklists.pdf)

More information about the Community Adult Literacy Program can be found on the Ministry of Advanced Education:



<http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/adulteducation/welcome.htm>

## **Useful Websites**

**DIBELS Data System: Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills**

<https://dibels.uoregon.edu/>

DIBELS is an assessment tool that identifies students at risk, provides direction for intervention, and provides progress monitoring



tools. DIBELS assessments are good predictors of later reading proficiency and they provide a powerful, research-based tool for screening students at risk. Available free online.

## Big Ideas in Beginning Reading

<http://reading.uoregon.edu/>

This website is designed to provide information, technology and resources to teachers, administrators, and parents. Big Ideas in Beginning Reading focuses on the five Big Ideas of early Literacy: Phonemic Awareness, Alphabetic Principle, Accuracy and Fluency with Text, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. The website includes definitions and descriptions of the research and theories behind each of the big ideas, describes how to assess the big ideas, and provides information on how to teach the big ideas in your classroom. Check it out!!



## Mark Your Calendars

**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](mailto:amorris@sd81.bc.ca) details and registration. For additional information on Fred Jones, visit <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. Visit <http://bctf.ca/bctla/conference/index.html>.

**October 22-24, Burnaby.** BCTELA hosts the *2009 National Council of Teachers of English 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](http://www.bctela.ca)

**October 22-23, Abbotsford.** Three workshops presented by Dawn Reithaug. 1) Three Tiers of Instruction and Intervention for Reading. 2) Functional Behavioural Assessment with Planning. 3) Three tiers of Positive Support and Intervention for Behaviour. Please contact 604-926-4714 or email [dreithaug@shaw.ca](mailto:dreithaug@shaw.ca)

**October 22-24, Whistler.** BCAMT hosts the 2009 *Northwest Mathematics Conference* at the Fairmont Chateau and Westin Resort in Whistler. Visit [www.bctf.ca/bcamt/nw2009](http://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. 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](mailto: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. All educators, administrators, gifted program facilitators, advocacy group members and parents are welcome. For conference details and registration information, go to [www.aegtcabc.org](http://www.aegtcabc.org).

**October 23, Vancouver.** *Speaking of Kids Conference 2009* will feature special guest Marlee Matlin addressing the issue regarding diversity. 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, Hazelton.** Brain Education for Enhanced Learning. During this two day workshop participants are exposed to the basic fundamentals of BE while learning how to incorporate this fun and and revolutionary program into their classroom. For information email [dahnarrow@hotmail.com](mailto:dahnarrow@hotmail.com)

**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](http://www.pita.ca) or contact Ray Myrtle [president@pita.ca](mailto:president@pita.ca)

**See the 2009/2010 Connections Professional Development Issue on the FNSA website for more opportunities...**  
<http://www.fnsa.ca/specialed.htm>