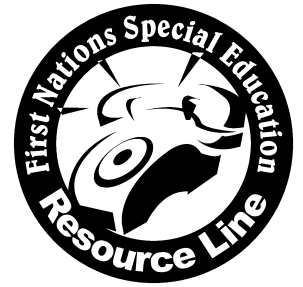


First Nations^T Special Education CONNECTIONS



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

Vol. 9, No. 10 June 2009

Do you work with First Nations students in British Columbia?

Do you have special education questions?

If so, you are invited to contact the First Nations Special Education Resource Line! The Resource Line is a free service for BC educators and parents.

The Resource Line is designed to help you brainstorm approaches, guide you toward helpful resources, help you to understand assessment documents, and share the latest information on special education.

When you call, 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 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 and the First Nations Schools Association, made possible by financial assistance from the Department of Indian Affairs.



June has arrived and it's a time of year for transition meetings, year-end assessments, report cards, field trips and sports days. In this busy month, I hope that you are able to take some time to reflect on your own accomplishments over the past school year, and chart some plans for change and growth.

Watch for more Connections newsletters in September!

Holly Smith,

Special Education Resource Line

Enlightening Reading



Using Multidisciplinary Assessment to Support the Growth and Progress of Students with Diverse Learning Needs

By Guest Contributor:

Madeline Price, FNESC/FNSA Special Education Consultant

At the International Conference on FASD in Victoria on March 14, 2009, I was asked to speak on multidisciplinary assessment and diagnosis and their value to First Nations communities and schools. The following article is a collection of my personal perspectives on those topics.

I want to preface this article with the understanding that some of the tools used in most Psycho-Educational Assessments may not be culturally appropriate or relevant for Aboriginal students and therefore may provide an underestimation of a student's ability. However, Multidisciplinary Assessments are a combination of Psycho-Educational Assessment, Speech and Language Assessment, Occupational Therapy Assessment, Physical Therapy Assessment, Adaptive Ability Assessment, Behaviour Rating Scales and Classroom Based Teacher Assessment.

In First Nations schools in BC today, assessment is not used to categorize and label individual students to provide for increased student funding. Assessments are used to understand the student's learning needs and to put supports and recommendations in place that will help that student reach their potential.

I have found that the idea of assessment and diagnosis in many First Nations communities is still looked upon negatively as "pathologizing" students which often creates a "shame and blame" reaction. Assessment

can be a healthy and effective means to support student growth and outline areas of learning strengths and needs. When used effectively, assessment can make a real difference to understanding the student profile, and can support student growth and success.

I have seen the assessment process work well in communities where the professionals who do the assessment have built a relationship and developed trust over time. These professionals have involved teaching staff, families and students in understanding the entire assessment process. In this way the team comes away with an understanding of the student's strengths, and recommendations for how to support the areas of need.

Often, when older students are part of this process, they learn for the first time the areas in the assessment where they showed definite strengths. For students with learning disabilities who have struggled in the classroom, this is especially important. If assessments and the assessment process are not well understood and the strengths are not brought forward in a way that validates the individual, then the work to be done is more difficult, if not impossible. In other words, working from a strengths based perspective is critical. We want students to believe in and recognize their personal potential, and assessment can make this happen.

The effective use of special education dollars for assessment is critical. A good "rule of thumb" is to ask the person doing the assessment to sit down with the teaching staff, family, and sometimes the student, to go over the assessment process and outline the areas of student strength and need. There should be time for the team to ask questions, and to listen to the recommendations. You may have to book fewer assessments if you plan to take adequate time to go over the process. Debriefing following assessment can demystify the student profile and truly make a difference to the learning and growth of the student.

Good Classroom Based Assessment provided by classroom teachers is a critical component in Multidisciplinary Assessment Teachers assess their student's learning, and then monitor and adjust their teaching to match the student's ability to ensure that they are showing growth at their instructional levels. If teachers do this well, they understand exactly where their students are compared to the benchmarks of their grade level. Research today says that CLASSROOM BASED ASSESSMENT MAKES THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE TO STUDENT LEARNING!

When Classroom Based Assessment and Multidisciplinary Assessment information come together and are shared with the student, family and team members, the stage is set for student success. The Student Learning Plan is the process that can bring this information together in a collaborative team-planning format where realistic and achievable goals are designed and instructional levels are set. Teachers need to be vigilant about teaching to students' instructional levels.

Assessment and collaborative team planning with funding for outside service support (Occupational Therapy, Speech Language Pathology and Special Education Support) creates a recipe for success for students with diverse learning needs.

CDBC – What is it all about?

The Complex Developmental Behavioural Conditions (CDBC) Program provides assessments and diagnoses for children and youth who are suspected of having an Autism Spectrum Disorder, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, or other Complex Developmental and Behavioural Conditions. On the following link, view an 11-minute video about the CDBC Assessment Program, the steps to obtain an assessment, what happens in the assessment process and the support for the families. You will also find links to other related content.

<http://www.fasdoutreach.ca/elearning/assessment-networks/complex-developmental-behavioural-conditions>



Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre Library

With over 15,000 items, you will be sure to find something of interest. The lending library at Westcoast houses British Columbia's most comprehensive, publicly accessible collection of materials related to child development, child welfare, and early childhood education and care.

Some of the topics of interest to special educators include: activities and curriculum, ADD-hyperactivity, anti-bias education, bullying prevention, child abuse prevention, child development, conflict and stress management, developmentally appropriate practice, diversity issues, early brain development, early intervention, gifted learners, grief, guidance and discipline, inclusion, learning disabilities, self-esteem, separation and grief, special needs, television and children, and many more. Browse online at <http://www.wstcoast.org/information/library.html>. There is a \$5 annual fee to establish a Westcoast Library Card.

Online Resources

FASD Connections

<http://www.fasdconnections.ca/>

This Canadian website targets adolescents and adults with FASD. It has links to numerous journal and research articles important to those working with people affected by Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

<http://www.ldac-taac.ca/>

Does a child in your class have a learning disability? With the proper resources, you can better understand how this student learns and how you can adapt to his or her learning style. The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada provides a number of resources to help you and your student meet everyday challenges.



Tinsnips: A Special Education Resource

www.tinsnips.org/

TinSnips A Special Education Resource

Tinsnips strives to share specialized teaching tools, techniques, worksheets, and activities with teachers of students who have autistic spectrum disorders and related developmental disabilities. Most resources are appropriate for students with other disabilities, including Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, communication disorders and developmental disabilities, and for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten children.

As well as Strategies, Seasonal Themes, Resources and Links, this site offers Ideas and Activities. Many of these incorporate reproducibles, picture symbols and sensory activities. The Make & Take, Basic Skills, Social Skills, Calendar Skills, Time and Money, and What's Cooking sections will save you time and inspire you to see how important life skills can be effectively presented to students with a range of disabilities.

Dates for your Calendar

Special Education Program Dates to Remember for June

June 5, 2009 SET-BC and Speech and Language Applications Due

June 19, 2009 SEP Final Report

JULY 2009

July 6-10, Delta. Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders - Practical Applications. Participants will learn about characteristics of ASD and appropriate supports; skills, with feedback from the instructor; data collection and interpretation skills; tips for creating positive learning environments for the student; visual supports; and teaching strategies.
<http://www.autismoutreach.ca/?q=training/course-calendar>

July 6-11, Terrace. First Nations Speech Language Assistant Certificate Course: FNSL 180 Technology and FNSL. This course aims to give students an understanding of and experience with technology used in assessing, intervening and communicating in the area of speech and language services. Coast Hotel.
www.nvit.bc.ca/program.aspx?pgmID=42#FNSL-180 or contact s_sec@fnesc.ca

July 9-18, Prince George. Level One Orton Gillingham Tutor Training. The Orton-Gillingham method teaches students to read and write through a multi-sensory, systematic, cumulative, fun approach. This is a 40-hour, intensive course, which will include sequencing of the alphabet, penmanship, visual drill, auditory drill, simultaneous oral spelling, teaching of a phonogram, syllabication, spelling rules, sight words, and more. Trainees will complete 6 lesson plans using multisensory aids, 6 one-hour practicum lessons, and a final review. For more information or to register, please contact: Gloria Olafson sddl@bcgroup.net T: 250-699-6495 or Stephanie Lindstrom sddl1@bcgroup.net T: 250-699-2522

July 6-31, Kelowna. UBC Okanagan Summer Institute in Education. Come for an Okanagan holiday and some exciting Pro-D that can earn you credits toward your TQS Category 5+. Choose from 13 week-long courses that offer a great variety of current, relevant, and interesting topics such as Quality Assessment, Murals, Drama, Birding, Technology and more.
www.ubc.ca/okanagan/education T: 250-807-9176.

AUGUST 2009

August 10-14, Vancouver. POPARD'S Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders This 30-hour POPARD course (formerly, The Para-Pro Course: A Hands-On Approach to Educating School-Age Children with Autism) is an excellent practical introduction to working with school-age children with ASD. This course is a requirement for teaching assistants in many school districts and is open to community professionals and parents.
http://www.actbc.ca/workshops_and_training/workshops/bydate.html

August 10-12, Parksville. Achieving Excellence in Writing Annual Summer Seminar, presented by Susan Augustyn, is based upon Blended Structure and Style in Composition, as written and developed by Dr. James B. Webster. This workshop presents an effective method of teaching writing to children, covering various stylistic techniques, and both expository and fictional writing are addressed. The material is structured and easy to teach. Applicable for teachers of Grades 2 to 11 classes. Contact: Susan Augustyn saugustyn@shaw.ca T: 250-248-6434

August 20-21, Vancouver. SMILE: Structured Methods in English Language Education. This hands-on two-day workshop provides a detailed overview of Structured Methods in Language Education (SMILE), a practical, multi-sensory communication development program that engages children as they progress through basic attending, phonemic awareness and sound-letter knowledge to the use of language in a descriptive and conversational manner. This method can be successfully used with any student who has a severe language-learning disability including those classified as aphasic, and those with autism and Down Syndrome.
http://www.actbc.ca/workshops_and_training/workshops/bydate.html

August 24-27, Vancouver. Jump Math. Summer Institute for experienced JUMP Math educators who are interested in becoming JUMP Math trainers. The Summer Institute will prepare you with the strategies and techniques to conduct effective training workshops. As a leader in mathematics education, you will become a JUMP Math trainer for professional development sessions, mentoring programs and community projects. At the end of the Summer Institute, you will have had a personal experience working with JUMP Math's founder, John Mighton, in the Train-the-Trainer model. <http://jumpmath.org/program/educators/summer-institute>

August 24-29, Parksville. Dr. Gordon Neufeld: Asking Sense of Kids, Level 1 Week Intensive Summer Institute. Dr. Neufeld's attachment-based developmental paradigm will train teachers to use the constructs of attachment, maturation and vulnerability to view children's problems and open the doors for deep-rooted change. Registration includes materials, certification and refreshments (one week \$400). To register, please contact Barb Witte at bwitte@sd70.bc.ca T: 250-720-2770. Register early due to limited space.

August 27-28, Vancouver. Teaching Social Thinking. Michelle Garcia Winner returns to Vancouver with two full days of insights and strategies for parents and professionals striving for a better understanding of the needs of those on the Autism Spectrum, including those with Asperger's Syndrome, High-Functioning Autism, ADHD or Non-Verbal Learning Disability. Attending Day 1 is required to fully appreciate the information presented on Day 2. www.actcommunity.net,

August 31-Sept 4, Vancouver. POPARD'S Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders This 30-hour POPARD course (formerly, The Para-Pro Course: A Hands-On Approach to Educating School-Age Children with Autism) is an excellent introduction to working with school-age children with ASD. Marianne has presented this course several times for ACT and continues to receive an outstanding response from participants. This course is a requirement for teaching assistants in many school districts and is open to community professionals and parents.
http://www.actbc.ca/workshops_and_training/workshops/bydate.html

Did you know that the Resource Line is available to parents? Consider sharing the Resource Line phone number or email with families in your community.