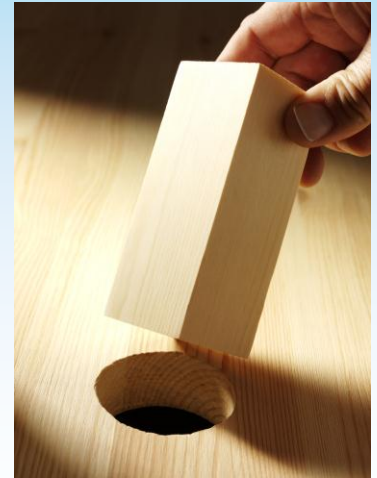


# Rounding the Peg or Squaring the Hole?

Improving Educational Outcomes for Students on the Autism Spectrum

Kate Day – Amaze



*Amaze acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we are meeting. We pay respects to their Elders, past and present, and the Elders from other communities who may be here today.*

# Adjustment and Modification

## Disability Standards for Education 2005

Schools must ensure that students access and participate in education on the same basis as students without a disability.

Obligation to consult.

Obligation to make reasonable adjustment.

- Enrolment
- Participation
- Curriculum Development, Accreditation and Delivery
- Student Support Services
- Harassment and Victimization

Applies to every education provider – government, Catholic, independent.

# Adjustment and Modification

- Consultation usually takes the form of a Student Support Group Meeting (SSG) during which time the school should seek information about the student's abilities and challenges.
- An Individual Learning Plan is usually developed as a result of this meeting. Behaviour Support Plans may also be requested/developed.

# Adjustment and Modification

- Parents can request a meeting at any time and do not need to wait for a meeting to be called by the school.
- These are all measures that can and should occur for any student with a disability regardless of funding status.

# Adjustment and Modification

- Your letter is an extremely useful tool for parents to bring to meetings re: appropriate adjustments. Be explicit about strategies and use plain English where possible
- There are MANY methods of adjusting other than providing an education support officer (a.k.a teacher's aide)
- Funding immaterial.

# Adjustment and Modification

Before we get to the good stuff.....

# Poor Practice

- Part-time days – not appropriate
- Exclusion – not appropriate or lawful (e.g. not permitted to enrol, excluded from camps/excursions, excluded from classes such as Art or Physical Education)
- Use of punitive consequences – not appropriate or effective. Advocate for skills development through PBS.



# Poor Practice

- Parents who wish to complain should do so in writing to the principal in the first instance, then follow the complaints process outlined by Department, Catholic Education Office or Independent Schools Vic.
- Can make a complaint to Australian Human Rights Commission re: failure to meet obligations under the Standards.
- Parents can have a support person present at meetings – there are advocacy services available.

# Teacher Knowledge

Most teachers unaware of what executive function is – may see “bad behaviour” rather than a cognitive difference. Sensory processing difficulties also rarely recognised.

Can be helpful to break areas down descriptively and describe helpful strategies.

# Executive Function Strategies

Starting/finishing activities:

*use of timers, checklists and visual schedules.*

Prioritising information/activities:

*Teach the skill of prioritising tasks and support the student to develop independence.*

Self-monitor behaviour and task orientation:

*check-ins, traffic-light system, five point scale. Working from teacher initiated self-monitoring to independent self-monitoring. A timer can be used as a prompt for regular “self check-ins”.*

# Executive Function Strategies ...continued

decision-making and problem-solving skills

- *Explicitly teach problem solving and decision-making skills.*
- *Discussions, flow charts, role-play and shared creation of social scripts or comic strip conversations*
- *There are various “thinking curricula” that can help teach problem-solving (such as Tony Ryan’s Thinker’s Keys, De Bono’s Thinking Hats, etc)*
- *provide opportunities to use and develop these skills and to compare strategies used*
- *Teach methods to evaluate decisions they have made: examining outcomes, was it the best decision? Will the same decision in the future always be a good/poor idea?*

# Executive Function Strategies ...continued






## organisation skills

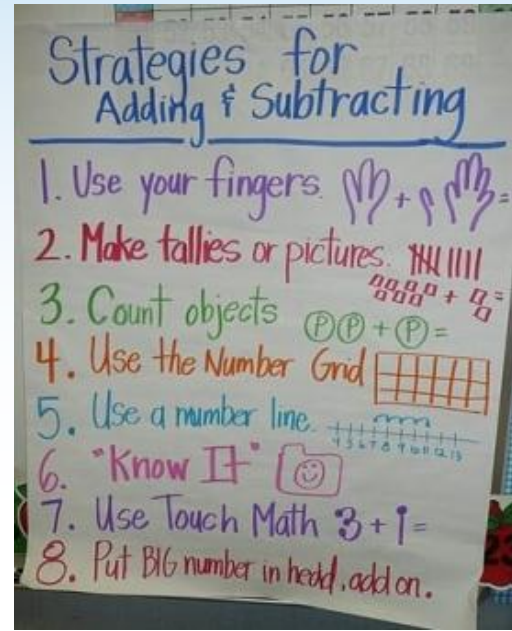
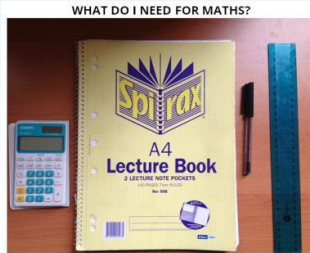
- *Checklists (materials or task steps)*
- *One-step instructions*
- *Dot points on whiteboard for multi-step tasks*
- *Pre-warn before end/start of task*
- *Extra time to transition between tasks, fetch materials*
- *Use of a homework diary (with prompts from teacher)*
- *Present tasks in segments (e.g. cut up an exam paper, use a finished box)*
- *Use of sticky-note reminders*

# Executive Function Strategies ...continued

## Organisation skills

Maths

-  pencil
-  calculator
-  ruler
-  book
-  ready to learn



		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Registration	8:45-9:00	Hall M001	Hall M001	Hall M001	Hall M001	Hall M001
Period 1	9:05-10:05	Maths A103	SOSE B202	Science C011	English B006	Maths A103
Period 2	10:10-11:10	English B006	Maths A103	SOSE B202	Science C011	English B006
Recess	11:10-11:40	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess
Period 3	11:45-12:45	Science C011	English B006	Maths A103	SOSE B202	Assembly M001
Period 4	12:50-1:50	SOSE B202	Science C011	English B006	Maths A103	Lunch
Lunch	1:50-2:30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	PPP G002
Period 5	2:35-3:35	SPC: Strength & Durability M102 Mr Blain	SPC: Strength & Durability M102	SPC: Strength & Durability M102	SPC: Strength & Durability M102	PPP G002
Period 6	3:40-4:40	PPP G002 Mr Toner	PPP G002	PPP G002	PPP G002	PPP G002



# Transitions

- For large transitions (e.g. end of year grade change) a transition plan outlining how continuity of social and academic support will be provided.
- Use of social stories, familiarisation visits, skill development in preparation for new environment
- For daily transitions (e.g. classroom to playground, moving to specialist classroom, moving from desk to floor-time) flag the transition in advance, be clear about exactly what the student needs to do, use multiple modes of communication to discuss transitions. A transition object or change card may help. For particularly disorganised or problematic transitions, consider sending the student on an errand or giving them a special task so that they are separated from the maelstrom.

# Emotional Regulation

- Recognising/naming emotions
- Discussing scales/intensity of emotion
- Teaching/discussing strategies for managing different emotions

*Cueing and supporting student to check-in and self monitor, to self-select coping strategies (e.g. take a break, drink some water, ask for help, 5 minutes of Lego time, draw a picture of the problem, etc).*

- ✓ appropriate goals for Individual Learning Plan
- X behavioural goals re: challenging behaviour → a behaviour support plan

Helpful resources such as “Zones of Regulation” by Leah Kuypers.



# Communication Support

Teacher understanding of receptive vs. expressive communication. The implications for teacher communication (predominantly verbal).

Splinter skills with communication can be misleading

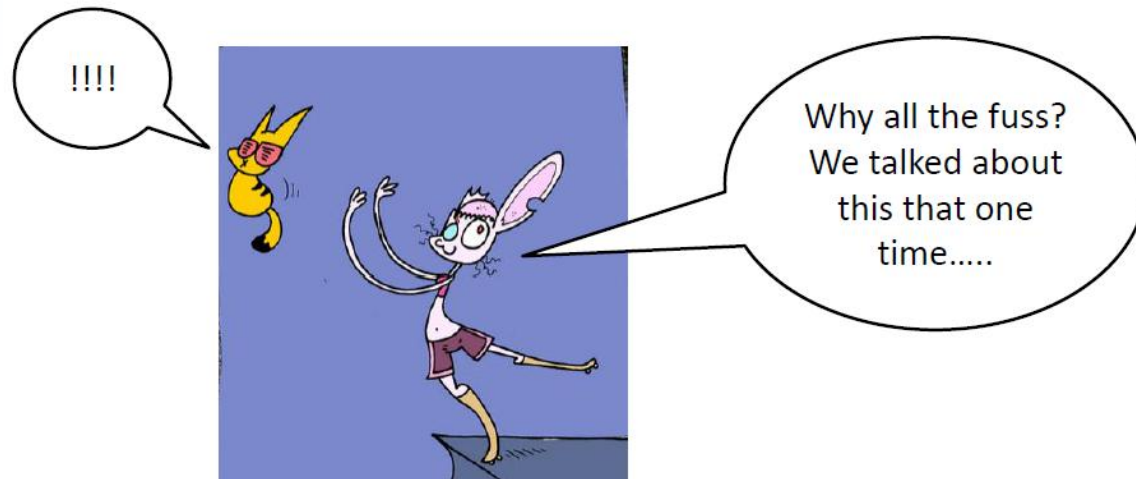
Explicit teaching of social/communication skills required – appropriate individual goal

- group-work skills
- asking the teacher for help or a break
- how to communicate that they are not sure what is expected
- asking to join/leave a game
- expressing frustration appropriately
- interpreting body language
- personal space
- interacting with peers

# Communication Strategies

- Use of visual supports
- Pre-warning of discussions
- Think time (questions and answers)
- Topic-specific word banks
- Short, clear instructions
- Checklists for multi-step tasks
- Multi-mode instructions (verbal, written, pictorial, recorded onto iPad)

All strategies must be explicitly taught, practiced and referred to many times each day – teachers may misunderstand and think that simply providing a tool is sufficient.



# Modification, Differentiation or Adjustment?

Tasks may be adapted or differentiated – this is not the same as “modified curriculum”.

Implications of terminology for certification.

- Adjustment
- Differentiation
- Modification

# Adjustment or Modification?

adapted from Kaweski, W. 2011

## Quantity

Sentences vs paragraphs, dot-points, completing one section of the work others are doing

## Time

Extra time to complete, allow rest/activity breaks

## Level of Support

Peer coaching/assistance, use of checklist, timer, staff assistance

## Difficulty

Simplify materials, language used, task complexity, pre-teach key vocab, colour code questions and use the colour to highlight paragraphs/sentences containing answer, amount of teamwork required

# Adjustment or Modification?

.....continued

## Input

written, visual, audio format or a combination; give instructions/questions one at a time, in clear, simple language, provide tasks in instalments, provide pre-written notes or a summary, same task but on the topic of special interest

## Output

verbal, typed, drawn, graphed, lists, cloze activities, mind maps, flow charts, venn diagrams, modelled in materials

# Adjustment or Modification?

.....continued

## Participation

Work with partner, independently, in short bursts with breaks, wearing gloves/headphones etc, being note-taker, photographer, etc.

## Parallel Curriculum

Provide different learning tasks which coincide with the general theme or topic the class is examining.

# Contact

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# Questions?