



Exceptional News!

Student Support Services Division
Department of Education

Newsletter

February 2010

Autism Backpacks



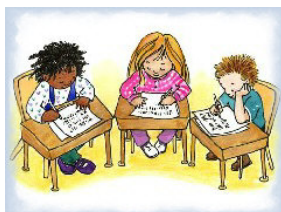
Every school in the province can be on the lookout for their new autism backpack. Each school will receive a resource kit filled with ideas for better communication, social skills development and behavioural strategies for students on the ASD spectrum. We are currently waiting for all materials to arrive so assembly can begin.

Differentiated Instruction Strategy

Would you like to add spice to your writing sessions? Then try the strategy **R.A.F.T.**

R.A.F.T. is an acronym for **Role**, **Audience**, **Format** and **Topic**. It can be used in any grade, for any subject. The R.A.F.T. format asks students to write from a viewpoint other than their own, to an audience other than the teacher, in a format other than answering questions at the end of a story or textbook chapter (Hollas, Betty. *Differentiating Instruction in a Whole-Group Setting 7-12*, Crystal Springs Books, 2007).

Now let's get started. After any subject or content area has been taught, the teacher can explain to the class that they need to be very creative and think of ways to write a response to what they have learned.



For example: In health class in primary grades, the teacher who has just finished a lesson on healthy eating may model this R.A.F.T. on the board:

Role: An orange
Audience: The body
Format: Persuasive note
Topic: Why I'm good for you

Remember to brainstorm together in the beginning. "What might an orange say to the body to convince the body to eat it?" Younger students may find it quite funny to have a juicy orange persuade the body why it should eat more oranges. Think of the adjectives one could use in this session. Use the board to write out the children's responses. Then read it together to ensure that it makes sense and models great writing. Then, pair or group the students and give them a chance to do the same R.A.F.T. using a different fruit or vegetable.

In a health class for the older grades you may want to try:

Role: Heart
Audience: French fries
Format: Complaint letter
Topic: Negative effects of fat in diet

Another example of a health class discussion is about increasing exercise into your life:

Role: The body
Audience: Director of school district
Format: Newspaper article
Topic: Establishing more physical education time in schedules

Math example:

Role: Fraction
Audience: Decimal
Format: Love letter
Topic: Number comparison

These activities can be done alone, in pairs, or in small groups. Think of the brainstorming that could occur during the writing process! Students would love to share their ideas on different topics.

As the teacher you could differentiate:

- the amount of time allowed for writing
- the peers they may write with
- the topics
- who gets to share at the end
- where and how the writing will be posted/shared

Student Support Services Database

The Department of Education is in the process of replacing the Student Support Services database. The new system will be a repository of student support services information and will provide a baseline of student assistant daily hours. It will also have the capacity to provide summary reports of needs and services in this area. It has been reviewed by district representatives and should be available to the province in March 2010 as an interim measure until the Provincial Student Information System is available.



Update on Inclusion – Collaborative Teaching

The pilot and partner schools for inclusive education have received training in models of co-teaching. Each special education teacher from the pilot and partner schools attended these sessions with a classroom/subject teacher partner. Together, they considered the profile of the classes in which they collaborate and explored which of the six models of co-teaching (one teach, one observe; one teach, one drift; parallel; alternative; station; and team teaching) might best suit the needs and situation of the class and teacher team. They analyzed where their relationship and practices were at present, and identified components which might evolve or work differently. They had opportunity to plan together for an upcoming unit of work considering the model of co-teaching which might be appropriate, the student grouping strategies which might best fit, and the differentiated instructional strategies to employ. Teachers also had the benefit of consulting with several program specialists from the district during the final afternoon to help with curriculum delivery planning.

Each model of collaborative teaching will be outlined in upcoming issues of the newsletter.

Staff Update

We have had two recent additions to the Student Support Services staff. We are happy to welcome Jewel Cousens as librarian for alternate format materials and Laurie Ann Strange as consultant for assistive technology. A full listing and contact information for the Student Support Services consultants is available on our website at http://www.gov.nl.ca/edu/department/directory/pes_studentsupport.htm

Alternate Format Materials

The Department of Education is upgrading its alternate format materials website. The current site, will be replaced on Monday, March 1, 2010 and will use the same URL:

<http://www.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/studentsupportservices/alternateformat.html>.

The new website better complies with copyright law and provides students with simplified access to their digital resources. Each student approved by the Department of Education will be assigned a unique username and password and will be given access to the specific resources requested through the application process. The new website also provides teachers, parents and students with access to the Department of Education's alternate format materials catalogue and provides a learning centre comprised of user guides, videos, and tutorials devoted to alternate format materials. Until it goes live, it can be previewed at:

<http://cmaf.gov.nl.ca/>. Anyone can browse the catalogue to see which resources are available in alternate formats or visit the learning centre, however, only authorized users can access the resources.

The learning centre is accessible through a link from the new alternate format materials main page, or directly at

http://www.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/studentsupportservices/resource_center/index.html.

The Department of Education will also be revising eligibility requirements for alternate format materials. These changes will better reflect guidelines for provision of alternate format materials outlined in the Canadian Copyright Act. For more information on these changes, please visit the learning centre.

Free Websites Available Through Public Libraries

Newfoundland and Labrador Public Libraries have more than a dozen free databases that can be used by everyone in the province as long as they are registered library users. If your community does not have a library, you can call the nearest one to register. To find a library near you, visit www.nlpl.ca/libraries/index.php



Several databases will be highlighted in each of the next few newsletters. Please visit the website at www.nlpl.ca and click on **Online Databases**.

World Book Encyclopedia is the best general encyclopedia for primary to high school students. The *World Book Kids* is aimed at K-6 while the

World Book Students is for grades 7-12. The articles, tables, maps, illustrations and added information are current, and factually correct. The citations are always present. Students can search, save, copy, share information via email and more. Teachers can check the *World Book Kids* site for some easy activities (check down the right side of the screen).

Tumble Books is a website that has taken a fantastic selection of quality children's books and animated them with graphics and sound, as well as highlighting the text as it is read. The storybooks section contains picture books suitable for ages 1-6 while *Tumblereadables* are chapter books for 7-10 year olds. It also includes lots of French and Spanish books under the section *language learning*. Games and puzzles will keep the children returning to this website. **This is an excellent site to use with ESL learners.**

Other databases are *Canadian Reference File* and *Masterfile Premier*. These are full-text websites that provide the latest, current information to be found in newspapers, magazines, newsletters, ebooks and more. Students at the junior high and high school level could use this for research on any topic.

Non-violent Crisis Intervention Training for Trainers in Autism Awareness

The Violence Prevention Initiative and the Department of Education have partnered to support the training of the non-violent crisis intervention trainers in a specialized program titled *Autism Awareness*. This program is designed to help teachers, administrators and student assistants to interact safely, effectively, and respectfully with students who have autism spectrum disorder. The strategies taught in the *Non-violent Crisis Intervention®* training program provide staff members with an effective framework for decision making and problem solving to prevent, de-escalate, and safely respond to disruptive behaviour. The training occurred in St. John's on December 15-17, 2009.



"How Does Your Engine Run?" ® the Alert Program® for Self- Regulation

As part of our continued efforts to build capacity within each district and at the school level, the Department of Education will sponsor a two-day training program (February 24-25, 2010) by TherapyWorks Inc. in "How Does Your Engine Run?" ® the Alert Program® for Self- Regulation.

The Alert Program® has been adapted for preschool through adult and for a variety of disabilities. It is a self-regulation program that supports children, teachers, parents, and therapists to choose appropriate strategies to change or maintain states of alertness. Educators learn methods to share the basic theory of the Alert Program® and sensory processing theory. The expectation is that the behaviour support specialists, program specialists and itinerants, and educational psychologists would share their learning with other educators in their district (guidance counsellors, special education teachers, classroom teachers, student assistants, etc.) so all can support students in developing self-regulation awareness.



Safe & Caring Schools Graduating Student Awards

The Graduating Student Awards aim to promote student awareness of the Safe & Caring Schools policy and acknowledge the contributions of youth in establishing and maintaining safe and caring schools and communities. Specifically, the goals are to:

- Recognize the leadership of youth across the province in completing projects and activities aimed at enhancing the safety and well-being of others in their schools and communities.
- Help students recognize that they can make a difference in the lives of others.
- Encourage and mobilize students to become involved in future initiatives.

Graduating students may apply for this award highlighting their leadership in fostering the safety and well-being of their school and community. The project or activity should have occurred during the student's high school career. Each application must be accompanied by references from school personnel and/or a community representative if the project is community-based.

Information and applications are available on the Department of Education website www.gov.nl.ca/edu and from district offices. Successful applicants will receive a \$500.00 tuition voucher. The date for submission is March 19.

Safe & Caring Schools Special Project Awards

This year, the Provincial Safe & Caring Schools Advisory Committee reviewed a record number of applicants and has awarded 30 deserving projects with a \$500.00 Safe & Caring Schools Special Project Fund Award.

Nova Central School District:

- Sprucewood Academy – Creating A Bucket Filling School
- Hillview Academy – Hillview Hawks S.O.A.R. (Positive Behaviour Supports - PBS)
- Exploits Valley Int. – PBS for EVI
- Hillside Elem. - Hillside Elementary S&CS Launch (PBS)
- Gander Academy – Be Positive Project (PBS)
- Riverwood Academy - PBS Launch
- Avoca Collegiate – Avoca Collegiate PBIS Implementation

Western School District:

- St. Boniface – Respect Day
- Our Lady of Mercy – PBS
- Humber Elem. – Catch Me Good (PBS)
- Roncalli Central High – PBS
- Piccadilly Central High - Piccadilly Central High School Action Committee
- Presentation Jr. High – S&CS Initiative (PBS)
- Belanger Memorial – Filling Your Bucket

Conseil Scolaire Francophone:

- École Boréale - Support émotionnel pour les élèves qui étudient dans une autre langue que l'anglais et pour les élèves ayant une différence intellectuelle ou physique.

Labrador:

- Peacock Primary School – Buddy: ASK – A Proactive Approach to Behaviour and Social Skill Development (PBS)
- JRS Middle School – We Respect Campaign (PBS)
- B. L. Morrison – Doing It Right (PBS)

Eastern School District:

- Laval High – Three Schools Collide at Laval
- Baccalieu Collegiate – AWARE
- Matthew Elem. – The Wall of Virtues
- Balbo Elem. – Bobcats have SOLE
- Lake Academy – Anti-Bullying Initiative
- St. George's Elem. – St. George's Gives Back
- Holy Heart of Mary – Mentorship of At Risk Students
- Bishop Field – The Peace Place
- Br. Rice Jr. High – International Club
- Holy Spirit High – Student Personal and Academic Development
- Holy Family – PBS
- Vanier – Vanier Sea Stars



Feedback

Please share your thoughts regarding this communication with student support services teams throughout the province.

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**Faculty of Education
Special Education Distance Courses –
Spring 2010**
*Interested in finishing your
Bachelor of Special Education?*

Web courses available this Spring/summer semester:

Intersession (6 weeks)

- **Education 3040 (Assessment and development of children's language abilities)**
- **Education 3690 (Collaborative practice)**

Spring (12 weeks)

- **Education 3680 (Therapeutic interventions for students with ASD)**

Eight of the 12 Special Education courses are now available via the web. Please check the Faculty's website for schedules: www.mun.ca/educ

Questions?

Please contact the Office of Undergraduate Student Services, Faculty of Education. Email: muneduc@mun.ca.