



Professional Studies

Assignment 2

SPELD

SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES



Jenna Weir and Alice Rowlands

What is Speld?

- Speld is a not for profit, volunteered driven organisation that works with families, whanau, schools businesses and individuals living with dyslexia and other specific learning disabilities.
- Speld relies on donations from the community such as the 'Pelorus Trust' and 'Elmbrook Technologies' to ensure it can continue to provide its services.

(New Zealand Speld, 2009)

Speld's vision and focus

- Like many other educational programs, Speld also works within the framework established by the New Zealand Ministry of Education.
- Speld's focus is to help assist students with dyslexia and other specific learning disabilities who are underachieving.
- Speld's vision is that by providing assistance to students with specific learning disabilities they can help to ensure that every learner with a specific learning disability has an equitable educational experiences.

(New Zealand Speld, 2009)

Services Speld offers in NZ

Speld provides a range of services that are specifically intended to assist students with dyslexia and other specific learning disabilities.

Speld provides:

- Individual student screening and assessment services for those suspected of dyslexia or other specific learning disabilities.
- Specialised teachers trained in theory and practical approaches to help target students with dyslexia and specific learning disabilities.
- Support and training courses for families and whanau of students with specific learning disabilities
- NZQA approved training course for qualified teachers and those with relevant university qualifications.

(New Zealand Speld, 2009)

Laurence Potter: Reflection One

In these reflections please comment on

- Why this topic is relevant and interesting to you.
- What you have learned from it
- How what is presented in each electronic presentation might impact on your practice as a teacher.

This topic is interesting for me for two reasons.

Most importantly my daughter has recently undergone SPELD testing and been diagnosed as mildly dyslexic. We have always known she was for want of a better word, 'different'. Upon moving to her new school in February, it became clear she was struggling academically far more than we had previously realized. All credit to my wife she did some extensive background investigation and finally booked her in for a SPELD consultation. At our own expense, and given no income at present, finances could have been an issue.

What has this to do with my teaching practice? I think it shows clearly the role, and importance, we as teachers can play in ensuring we recognize the various disabilities that may be present within our classroom. That we are able to recognize the signs, that we are able to implement strategies to assist both the

student as one of many diverse learners within our classroom, and as importantly those people outside the school who care for the student, the whānau. It's important we are able to access the necessary resources and information regarding both the conditions itself, as well as to be able to help and advise the student and parents regarding what the school can do, and will do to support the learner. This will include not just in class support, but also what potential financial help, if any, maybe available?

And this presentation? I realize it wasn't part of the brief to critique the 'look and style' of the work, but I thought this presentation stood out as the most aesthetically pleasing to the eye. It was so well set out, even the colour scheme was inspiring. So it taught me the importance of getting to know the capabilities of some of the basic MS suite, in order to be to create presentations which are both informative, but readable. We are bombarded with information these days, and so it's important to make your message engaging, which I feel this presentation did very well. (So much so I was inspired to play with a template doc for a school newsletter provided within MS Office/ Word for this reflection).

As for the content, this followed on where the aesthetics left off. I felt the use of information was efficient, logical, and informative.

And in terms of my own practice? I feel I better understand the system now, what services are available. I also I feel I have some basic foundation in the type of strategies I need to be employing with students with such learning difficulties in my classroom. It has also reminded me of the importance of acknowledging the range of diverse learners with the classroom; and that diversity is provided from a multitude of sources.

How you (teachers) can help?

- Help children talk about their feelings so you can effectively understand their feelings.
- Reward effort, not just the product
- Use positive language when confronting unacceptable behaviour to avoid decreasing the child's confidence and self image.
- Find ways to relate the children's interest to the demands of real life and recognise his/her achievement
- Create opportunities for children with dyslexia who excel in one subject to help other children also with dyslexia children who struggle with that same subject.

(New Zealand Speld, 2009)

Reference

- Asland, J., Harrison, P., Tapscott, J., Pace, K. & Wray, J. (2011). [Screening for specific learning difficulties: The impact on the progression of pre-registration nursing students. Journal of Nurse Education 32 \(1\), pp. 96-100.](#)
- Hodson, E. & Brookings, K. (2009). [Evaluation of Speld in New Zealand. Retrieved from http://www.nzcer.org.nz/pdf/speld-report-2.pdf](#)
- [Dyspraxia: Kiwi Families. \(2012\). School age education: Learning disabilities. Retrieved from www.kiwifamilies.co.nz/articles/dyspraxia/](#)
- [New Zealand Speld \(2009\). Welcome to Speld. Retrieved from www.nzspeld.co.nz](#)

In New Zealand SPELD provides different opportunities for you to develop your knowledge and skills

- 1) **Certificate Course in Specific Learning Disabilities:**
Available to New Zealand Certified Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary teachers, or those with a tertiary qualification and experience in working with children.
- 2) **Introductory Course in Specific Learning Disabilities:**
For parents, caregivers, teachers and teacher aides
Auckland: 20th October & 3rd November 2012. [puckland@speld.org.nz](#)
- 3) **Assessor Training:**
Applicants who have the required NZCER level C qualification
- 4) **Conferences:**
6-7 October 2012 - Palmerston North Convention Centre

DYSLEXIA

Below outlines a list from New Zealand Speld (2009) which identified key signs that are common for children who have dyslexia:

- Frequently reverses letters and numbers i.e. b/d
- Slower at processing and retaining learning
- Potential contrasting capabilities between oral and written skills
- Low self confidence reading out loud
- Frequently makes spelling errors and lacks ability to identify errors, especially with words that sound the same
- Noticeably under achieving in handwriting, punctuation and grammar
- Unable to follow instructions correctly
- Slower work productivity despite working hard
- Fine motor coordination may be problematic eg. tying laces.

(New Zealand Speld, 2009)

ADHD

A. Attention Deficit Disorder

D. Deficit

H. Hyperactivity

D. Disorder

Hyperactivity:

Distraction to others
Fidgets: Feels the need to move
Noisy play
Seems to be constantly 'on the go'
Talks excessively

Inattention:

Fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes
Has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activity
May appear inattentive and unresponsive when spoken to
Struggles to follow things through
Avoids, dislikes or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort.
Is easily distracted
Very limited attention span

Dyspraxia

- A neurological disorder of motor co-ordination

- Severe cases are usually picked up in early childhood by paediatricians because of delays in milestones
- Mild cases are picked up by parents and early childhood teachers
- Very mild cases may not be picked up until later in primary school

(Dyspraxia: Kiwi Families. .2012)