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DEVELOPMENTAL
EDUCATORS
AUSTRALIA INC

June 2017

Reflections

Not so long ago, a fellow DE friend and I were reflecting about our “uni days”, although technically as one of the first rounds of graduates (1989..yes, last century!!) from “the triple D” we were not quite considered to have “cut it” as “uni students” given that we were doing a diploma at a college of advanced education!

We remembered fondly the beginning discussions about the move to a degree course, workload comparisons etc. and proudly watched the evolution of the degree programme and the diversity of skills and roles of its graduates.

Many of our peers were placed into management roles, others practiced as very highly skilled “support workers”. A good number of us remain at work in this challenging and dynamic sector despite some misunderstanding re the role and skill sets of “the DE”.

I recalled that as a new graduate I returned to country Sth Australia to work, and continued to do so for many years. There were very few of us around “in the bush”, and our skill set, whilst obviously needed, was not well understood. I recall negotiating with Flinders Uni staff to trial a pilot programme of the degree off campus in the late 1990’s because I so fervently believed that more practitioners were needed in country areas.

Upon moving interstate in 2011, I was again challenged by people not having heard of Developmental Educators, not understanding what on earth they did or what a DE might add to their organization. I did however discover several of my new workplace peers were undertaking their degrees externally, and were highly motivated and excited about the opportunities that it would provide for them.

Several weeks ago, those of us fortunate enough to attend the PD session run by the NDIS to learn about registering as service providers heard statements about how Developmental Educators were needed urgently, and how valued our skill set is. How far we have come!

Since returning to Adelaide I have had the most fortunate opportunity to meet with members of the DEAI committee; an amazing bunch of people! The website, the memberships, the PD events, the engagement with NDIS and AHPA that many of us are blissfully unaware of, all happen due to their tireless work.

BUT...what is the purpose of all this reflection, and why is this “shared history” still meaningful? From my perspective it has served to remind me that we are continuing our journey, and for my part I hope that this newsletter is another tool to connect us and to enable us

to share our journeys. BUT, we need it to be meaningful and provide more to you than what you might already access via the website or Facebook page.

Consequently, in this edition we seek your feedback on how we can use the newsletter moving forward as a way to do just that. We have plans to include brief stories from graduates who are NDIS registered, have gone into private practice, and who are living and working interstate. We are also particularly keen to find ways to ensure that our interstate members, and those in rural or remote locations are supported to connect and contribute to the DE community.

You’ll find links to a survey that will help us to gather some of this information in a story later in this edition.

Having said that, please keep in contact via all the usual methods (via the DEAI email, phone, website page) to give feedback, make suggestions or submit a story or links to articles etc.

Lisa Jardine

Newsletter Editor



The DEAI committee endeavours to source a range of appropriate and affordable professional development activities for members. For the most part we have endeavoured to do this for free.

However, the committee has made a decision to charge a small fee to cover some of the associated costs of providing these activities. This will be

Members:- \$5

Non-members:- \$10.

This charge will contribute directly toward covering the costs associated with activities (advertising, refreshments, thank you gifts or payments to providers etc.)

Mentoring

It is well recognized that professional mentoring has benefits both for mentor and mentee, and as such, is a form of professional development that is supported by the DEAI.

As more Developmental Educators venture forth into private practice, and also work in rural or isolated environments, opportunities to network and share both skills and knowledge are becoming

increasingly important.

There are also significant numbers of students seeking support via placement with organisations and individual practitioners.

To that end, we strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with the DEAI Professional Mentoring Guidelines on the website, and encourage you to contemplate this in relation to both your own PD and the supports

you may be able to provide another.

Should you be interested and available to support this programme, (either as a mentor or mentee, or both!) we ask that you formalise this via the downloadable "Professional Mentoring Agreement Form" from our website, which can be returned to us via the regular channels.

Thanks for your support

Feedback Please!

The committee are seeking feedback from members with regard to distribution, content and format of the newsletter.

We would like your opinions on this.

In relation to content and format, it is our aim to make this newsletter as useful and accessible as possible for all DEAI members.

We'd really like to know what you want and how we can provide it to you within a newsletter format.

Please let us know your thoughts by using the survey monkey link below, or by responding to the one sent to members via email

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/8CY9TMY>

Professional Development Opportunity Restrictive Practices & Positive Behaviour Support

DEAI are very pleased to provide another exciting professional development opportunity:-

Richard Bruggemann, Office of the Senior Practitioner, will present "Restrictive Practices and Positive Behaviour Support in the NDIS" on Wednesday 5th July, 6.15 -8.00pm.

To find further details and register, please use the following link:

<http://www.deai.com.au/event/restrictive-practices-and-positive-behaviour-support-in-the-ndis>

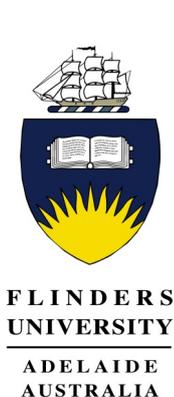
We also encourage members to use the DEAI website links to

professional development activities. These include links to a range of online activities and webinars, to information about conferences.

Please remember to keep your professional development records up to date and submit prior to 27th October 2017.

The Flinders Connection

Developmental Educators and the DEAI have an exceptionally strong connection with Flinders University.



This began in approximately 1991, when Sturt College of Advanced Education amalgamated with Flinders University, and the previous Diploma level qualification became the Bachelor of Applied Science (Developmental Disabilities).

The current degree title (Bachelor of Disability and Developmental Education - BDDE) was applied to advance the profession of Developmental Education.

The DEAI and the staff of BDDE programme at Flinders University continue

to have a mutually inclusive and reciprocal relationship. To this end, there is Flinders University staff representation on the DEAI committee, and in turn the DEAI sponsor an academic excellence award (see article below) and source speakers to introduce new student DE's to the profession at the beginning of their course.

Both parties often work together to co-host professional development events and share information at careers expo's, disability and ageing events, and may work jointly with disability agencies and peak bodies to enhance and understanding of the profession.

Flinders University School of Health Sciences Student Prize Awards

Prize for Academic Excellence

The Developmental Educators Australia Incorporated (DEAI) sponsors the Prize for Academic Excellence, which is awarded annually to a student enrolled in the Bachelor of Disability and Developmental Education with the highest grade and mark in the topic *DSRS2234—Direct Instruction*.

This year, the prize has been awarded to **Kay Keit**, an external student who is based in New South Wales. Kay's assessment work was exemplary, and certainly highlights the achievements that can be made for those studying externally. She has also been honoured with membership of the Golden Key Honour Society.



Other Awards and Prizes for this year's D&CI graduates included:

Ellen Fraser-Barbour: The Bachelor of Disability and Developmental Education, Academic Excellence Prize.

Demi Martin: The Bachelor of Disability and Developmental Education, Practical Excellence Prize.

Katie Butler: The Disability and Community Inclusion Unit, Postgraduate Research Excellence Prize.

Sharon Foreman: The Master of Disability Studies, Academic Excellence Prize.

Flinders University School of Health Sciences BDDE Graduation Ceremony



April 12th 2017 saw the official graduation ceremony for the most recent BDDE graduates.

This year there were 10 undergraduates, 18 grad certificate and 3 Masters graduates who received their parchments. We congratulate them all on their achievements,

IN PROFILE..... narratives to encourage the sharing of our journey

ANNA HUGHES:- My Future My Way

I would like to share the journey to private practise and the way that my contribution as a DE has unfolded in the NDIS space. I guess for me it has been seeing the possibilities and not focusing on the barriers and then watching the possibilities unfold.

As a DE in the government and non Government sector I didn't feel that the skills specific to my profession were utilised appropriately for the maximum benefit of the individuals being supported. Often therapists and other providers although they tried, worked with their profession as a primary focus. I also think that at that time the value and contribution of the DE was not valued .

I think that in going into private practise with another AHP (Social Worker) I have been able to lift the profile of the DE and the contribution they make in the role of therapeutic inputs for individuals being supported to achieve their goals. We work with a wide range of AHP from different disciplines and the role and contribution of the DE is invaluable in supporting the participant to achieve their full potential . Working alongside other AHP has demonstrated the strengths and contribution of our profession .

One thing I have realised is that many DE do not have this opportunity and this impacts perhaps how the profession is viewed generally. It is also the area that we find we need too support DEs with, to share their expertise in our business.

Anna's signature quote from George Bernard Shaw reflects this realisation:- " Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself." Thank you Anna for sharing your thoughts and inspirations re the profession.

A MATTER OF RESEARCH:-

Mental Health Matters: seeking the views and perceptions of people with complex communication needs regarding mental health and wellbeing.

The 'Mental Health Matters: the views and perceptions of people with complex communication needs regarding mental health and wellbeing' research project is currently recruiting participants. Eleanor Watson is a Bachelor of Disability and Developmental Education (Hons) student conducting honours research, supervised by A/P Pammi Raghavendra and Ruth Crocker. Eleanor is interested in meeting with adults with CCN who are happy to share their views on mental health and wellbeing in an interview.

The aim of this research project is to explore the views and perceptions of people with CCN regarding access to support for mental health and wellbeing. Explorations of the perspectives of people with CCN will support the identification of the barriers and facilitators which exist for people with CCN when they seek to address mental health and wellbeing.

Participants in this research will need to:

Be over 18 years of age

Identify as having CCN or experiencing severe difficulties using speech to meet daily communication needs.

Have AAC (including use of a Communication Assistant if preferred) to enable participation in an interview,

Be able to answer yes/no without the assistance of another person, and

Be willing to share their views on mental health and wellbeing.

Diagnosis of a mental health condition is not required for participation in this project.

If you are interested, or know someone who may be interested, please contact Eleanor by email at eleanor.watson@flinders.edu.au or by phone on: 0422 864 974. An information pack can be sent out to you at your request.

Developmental Educators
Australia Inc
PO Box
Christies Beach SA

Phone: 0455 932 220

Email: sontact@deai.com.au

WE'RE ON THE WEB
www.deai.com.au