

## Success in Maths, Science and ICT

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Project Title	Success in Mathematics, Science and ICT for Students with Intellectual Disability in Rural and Regional Areas
Project Team	Dr Genee Marks
Period	Ongoing
Funding Agency	SiMERR
Organisational Base	SiMERR Victoria

### Description

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Although the various school systems (both for those students with intellectual disabilities included into regular schools, and for those who complete their schooling in segregated specialist education) claim to focus on schooling that is relevant to adult life, very few of these students leave school with a functional or authentic understanding of mathematics, science and ICT.

Furthermore, the young adults in vocational education and training appear to believe that success in mathematics, science and ICT areas is the preserve of those at best heading for university or TAFE courses, or at least those without disabilities. Yet many areas of vocational development, such as the hospitality industry, expect practical and applied levels of understanding and skill in mathematics, science and ICT.

Preliminary work by the researcher addressing authentic mathematics learning of young adults with disability in the Geelong region has shown that it is their belief that little of the mathematics learning that they completed at school had any bearing on their vocational aspirations, education and training. Generalising from mathematics education, it seems reasonable to propose that the school-based experiences of these students in science and ICT, as well as in mathematics, do not prepare these students adequately for the pathways into employment and training.

### Participants

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This project focuses on special education facilities in particular, to ascertain the expectations and perceptions of teachers, parents and senior students with intellectual disability in relation to success in mathematic, science and ICT education in rural and regional centres of Ballarat and Geelong. To provide some basis for comparison, two special schools in Melbourne will also be included in the research.

School policy and curricula documents will be considered, and lessons will be observed, as well as focus group interviews being carried out. Comparisons will be made with the expectations of the VELs, and with the guidelines for their use with students with disabilities. The nature of career guidance within the schools will be evaluated, as well as employment aspirations of students, and those of parents and teachers for the students.

### Findings

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### Outcomes

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The need for students in specialist settings in rural and regional areas to receive substantial and well-considered mathematics, science and ICT education cannot be overlooked. This project enables students to receive relevant and appropriate education that will prepare them for adult life in the wider community. It will also inform the understanding and practices of teachers within these settings.

### Impact

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