

Adaptive Help-seeking Strategies

Project Title	Adaptive Help-seeking Strategies in the Inclusive Secondary Classroom
Project Team	Dr David Paterson (SiMERR NSW)
Period	January 08 – December 08
SiMERR	
Organisational Base	SiMERR NSW

Description

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This project seeks to investigate the cognitive strategies used by students with intellectual disabilities as they engage in mathematics and science lessons in regular junior high school classrooms without specialist support. There is evidence that in small schools in rural and regional NSW, formal support for students with disabilities is often lacking and that these students are required to rely more on their own cognitive resources and the instructional context of the regular classroom with the subject teacher. A better understanding of these strategies should lead to the development of instructional approaches better able to develop efficient and self-regulated learning.

The project will have a special focus on strategies which students use to seek help in these inclusive classrooms. Based on findings from the earlier study it is anticipated that self-monitoring and interactions with peers shall be significant aspects of help-seeking and that the proposed study may identify ways that teachers could facilitate adaptive help-seeking in the classroom.

An online survey will be used to gather data from junior high school teachers in rural NSW locations.

The Australian Association of Special Education (AASE) and Mathematics Association of NSW (MANSW) are collaborating in the project.

Participants

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Secondary teachers (Grades 7-9), mostly members of the Australian Association of Special Education (AASE) and the Mathematics Association of NSW (MANSW).

Findings

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The data collection phase of this project is continuing. Findings are, therefore, preliminary. Initial review of responses indicates that target students were predominantly (72%) those with mild intellectual disabilities. Respondents mainly taught English (36%) and mathematics (21%) with a broad distribution of other subjects represented. This distribution may be an artefact of the way the survey was distributed (though an association of special educators) and responses from MANSW will, obviously, be teaching in mathematics classes.

Help-seeking strategies of students with and without disabilities were reported to be quite different. Whereas most students persist in the face of difficulties or seek assistance from learning materials, for example, these help-seeking strategies were rarely or never observed of students with disabilities.

Outcomes

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