

Bulletin



**Special Issue:
Reading Fluency**

LDA Council 2019-20

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Learning Difficulties Australia is an association of teachers and other professionals dedicated to assisting students with learning difficulties through effective teaching practices based on scientific research, both in the classroom and through individualised instruction.

THE BULLETIN

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From the President

Lorraine Hammond

In recent times, I have noticed the word ‘professionals’ uttered more frequently from the mouths of politicians and journalists to describe teachers. If the pandemic we currently find ourselves in the midst of has changed anything, it’s the perceptions of parents and the wider community for what teachers do.

I am a teacher, and like many of you, I took up the challenge of full-time work as an academic and that of a first-time home-schooling parent towards the end of Term 1. The first thing that I realised was that there weren’t enough hours in the day to do both roles well and second, I began wondering how quickly parents would find a vaccine for the virus if we all had to keep home-schooling any longer.

Fortunately, the persuasive essay my son had to write was within my remit and I dusted off my school-girl French to help him write and learn a speech, but maths proved a worthy opponent. My son isn’t keen on maths, so the PowerPoints supplied by the school were optimistic at best. The material was new and without the precursor skills and knowledge, it was all very difficult to understand. Any help that I offered was resolutely rejected on grounds that “we don’t do it that way anymore.”

It was at this point that I read an incredibly useful blog post by Dr Paul A. Kirschner titled ‘Tips for effective teaching if you have to teach at a distance’ that is based on his latest book, *How Learning Happens*, which arrived in my letterbox last week.

Kirschner explains that while online education is offering a temporary solution, the instructional techniques involved are not the same as what we do in the classroom during face-to-face education:

“Beware of offering too much new subject matter and possibly concentrate more on maintaining previously learned

subject matter. This advice is powerful and good to follow, because learning materials that you don’t repeat is forgotten. Think of the infamous dip after the summer holidays!”

I bet, like me, you already knew that. LDA Consultants have had to adapt to online learning quickly and combine the best of online learning with explicit instruction. What teachers do has the greatest impact on student achievement and there’s no substitute for guided practice and formative assessment.

As we are unable to provide face to face professional learning at this time, LDA has engaged a range of excellent speakers to present short professional learning webinars on a weekly basis starting in mid-May. These Wednesday sessions are free, and I encourage you to share information about them with your colleagues. Details about our Weekly Wednesday Webinars will be publicised on LDA’s Facebook and Twitter as well as via our e-news.

References

- Kirschner, P. A. (3 April, 2020). Tips for effective teaching if you have to teach at a distance. <https://randomthoughtsandideas926468149.wordpress.com/2020/04/03/tips-for-effective-teaching-if-you-have-to-teach-at-a-distance/>
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LDA’s President, Dr Lorraine Hammond AM, is an Associate Professor at the School of Education at Edith Cowan University. Lorraine



divides her time between research projects on high impact instruction, teaching pre and inservice teachers, supervising higher degree students and writing and delivering professional learning for The Kimberley Schools Project. Lorraine is the Chair, Deputy Chair and Board Member of three high performing schools in WA. Lorraine has been a member of LDA Council since 2010 and has previously served as President and Vice-President