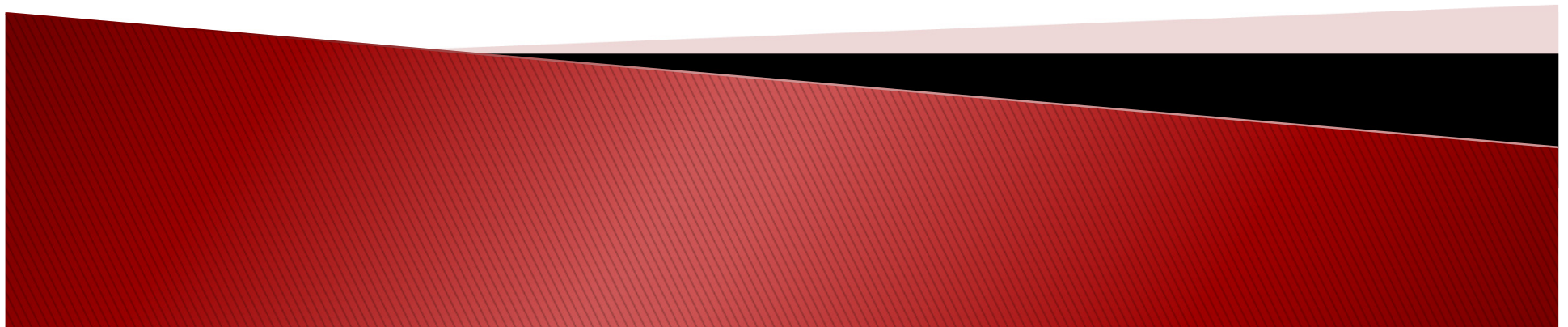


AGOSCI CONFERENCE

Thursday 18th May

Jacinta Xavier



Does a whole school focus
on communication and
MML systems build
literacy?

About the school:

- ▶ Red Hill Special School: a Queensland Department of Education and Training school campus
- ▶ Located five kilometres from the Brisbane GPO
- ▶ We provide highly individualised programs for children and students with complex educational needs.
- ▶ Our programs cater for children and students from birth to school leaving age.
- ▶ ECDP – 30 children
- ▶ P – 12 – 65 students





Red Hill Special School - Communication

Communication

We believe communication underpins all areas of curriculum and delivery, and that all students have the capacity and the [right](#) to communicate, and to be engaged in genuine opportunities to learn to communicate whether through spoken language or some form of augmentative and/or alternative communication e.g. picture symbols, signs or speech generating devices (see [Communication for All](#)).

We respect and value all communication attempts. Communication enables us to have control over our environment and to influence that environment and have an effect on our environment. This means that staff see themselves as crucial communication partners and that all learning areas across the curriculum include and encourage communication.

We recognise that behaviour has communicative intent and that the management of student behaviour is closely linked with the development of effective communication. This is reflected in our three school expectations (see [RHS33 Responsible Behaviour Plan](#)).

- I communicate
- I look, listen and learn
- I make good choices

We support the process of communication by which an individual shares needs, experiences, ideas, knowledge and feelings in a two-way exchange with a communication partner. It takes a wide variety of forms, from two people having a face-to-face conversation through to highly supported interactions where a significant person partners with a student to support and interpret their communicative behaviours and intent.

We provide resources to support the development of communication skills - tools and environments, therapists, a range of communication approaches or modes i.e. Augmentative or Alternative communication (AAC), technological resources, positive behaviour support and the curriculum.

Communication Teaching and Learning

Each student will be given opportunities to learn and develop communication skills across the curriculum and within the collaborative team (including teachers, SLP, OT, PT, teacher aids, school leaders, family members):

- ensures current student communication is recorded in Personalised Learning or [OneSchool](#) and in Personal Communication Information and for every student in a Communication Passport
- continuously uses data gathering and communication assessment tools to inform teaching practice, planning and the curriculum
- refers students having assessment or intervention to the SLP using school referral processes
- works with families, therapists (OT, PT, SLP), community agencies, medical services and other related partners
- engages in daily, focused and explicit teaching of communication
- creates authentic communication opportunities across the day and a range of learning contexts and people
- ensures students have access to their communication system across all learning contexts
- models the use of the whole school and/or individualised communication approach or strategy
- applies evidence-informed best practice e.g. PECS, PIGD, visual tools, ALS boards, Intensive Interaction, [Rapid 40s](#) across the curriculum
- is working towards identifying student communication needs and a defined communication system
- ensures students having school have authentic documentation (Communication Passport) of how they communicate
- reports on communication to build literacy and numeracy

Communication Leadership

The leadership team has a vision of communication learning embedded within curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

Leaders

- allocate resources to support the implementation of communication embedded across the curriculum
- research and promote the use of technologies for communication
- provide ongoing professional learning, mentoring and coaching with staff to improve pedagogy
- work with the SLPs to support whole school initiatives and priorities
- support families to identify communication issues, access support and training and collaborate with the team in developing a defined communication system for their child
- provide OTs and PTs to help identify potential barriers/obstacles and to plan for access, specialist equipment, personal support and optimal positioning for students when communicating.

Communication plan

How we started....

We needed a way to:

- ▶ Prioritise students for SLP service and support
- ▶ Show development and skill acquisition of students with CCN
- ▶ Track students progress in the areas of communication and literacy
- ▶ Look at school wide processes of recording student data that could be easily shared with all staff.



Levels of communication competence

What we did:

- ▶ We met as a Leadership Team with our SLP
- ▶ We looked at the Dynavox InterAACt framework and adapted this to suit our students and context
- ▶ We defined 4 levels of communication ability and interventions for students at RHSS
- ▶ We met with teachers to assign a level to each student
- ▶ We used our Federal Government funding (Investing for Success) to fund extra SLP and Literacy consultant support
- ▶ We decided on a whole school approach to modelling language (PODD)

- ▶ Over the last 12 months we have refined these levels and made the definitions clearer with input from SLP and Literacy Consultant



RHSS Communication Level 4

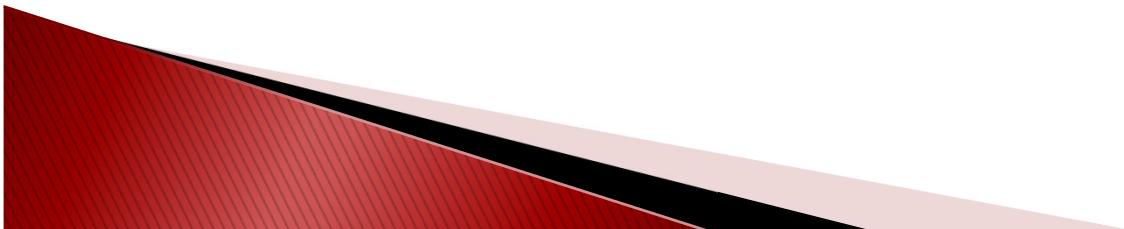
Whole school communication system – Informal Communicator

▶ **Student:**

- Primarily uses informal communication e.g. facial expressions, vocalisations, body movements
- No reliable yes/no, informal and inconsistent
- Communication success relies heavily on communication partner

▶ **Communication Environment:**

- Modelling whole language system (PODD/P2Go) for receptive and expressive communication
- Communication is multimodal
- Establishing a recognisable yes/no response by attributing meaning and shaping student responses
- Communication is recorded in a RHSS PCI form



RHSS Communication Level 3

Identifying an individualised communication system – Emergent Communicator

▶ **Student**

- Communication attempts are more recognisable in engaging activities
- Performance with AAC is inconsistent
- AAC use can be fleeting and variable
- Consolidating a yes/no response

▶ **Communication environment**

- Modelling whole language system (PODD/P2Go) for receptive and expressive communication
- Communication is multimodal
- SLP meets with teacher, family and others to identify process for determining individualised communication system. This may include classroom observations, data gathering, completing a Pragmatic profile etc.
- Communication success relies heavily on the communication partner
- Communication is recorded in an RHSS PCI form

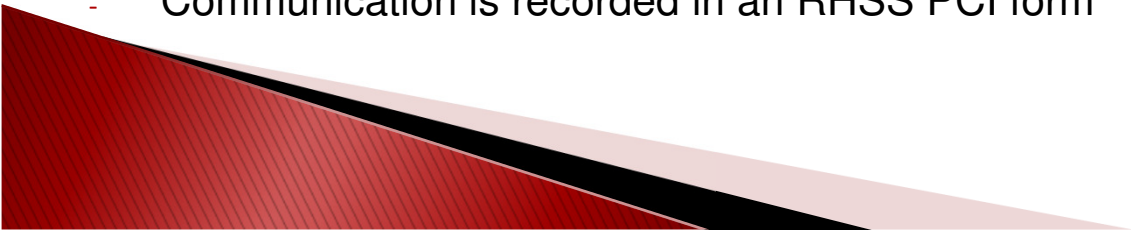
RHSS Communication Level 2

Learning an individualised communication system – Context Dependent Communicator

▶ Student::

- Has an identified individualised communication system which they are learning to use across all environments and with a range of communication partners
- Consolidating a consistent yes/no response
- Has reliable symbolic communication dependent on partners or contexts

▶ Communication Environment:

- Modelling whole language system (PODD/P2Go) for receptive and expressive communication
 - Communication is multimodal
 - Family/carers actively access training/support to use the communication system
 - Family/carers model the communication system
 - Student requires extensive modelling of the communication system
 - Communication is recorded in an RHSS PCI form
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RHSS Communication Level 1

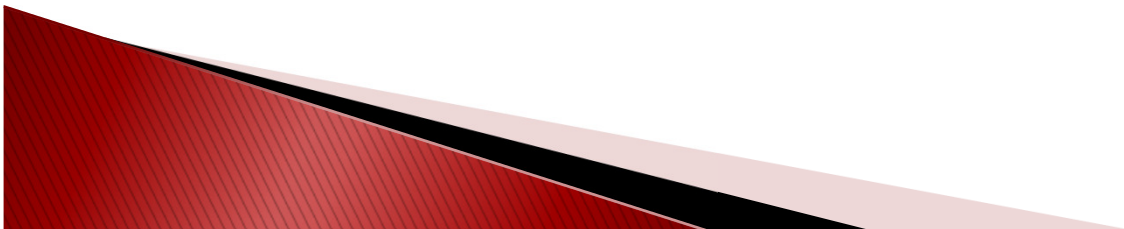
Individualised Communication system – Independent Communicator

▶ Student:

- Has a functional and individualised communication system that facilitates vocabulary and syntactic growth at home and school
- Is consolidating being able to say anything to anyone in any context
- Can access their communication systems as independently as possible
- Backup communication systems are in place if preferred options are unavailable

▶ Communication Environment:

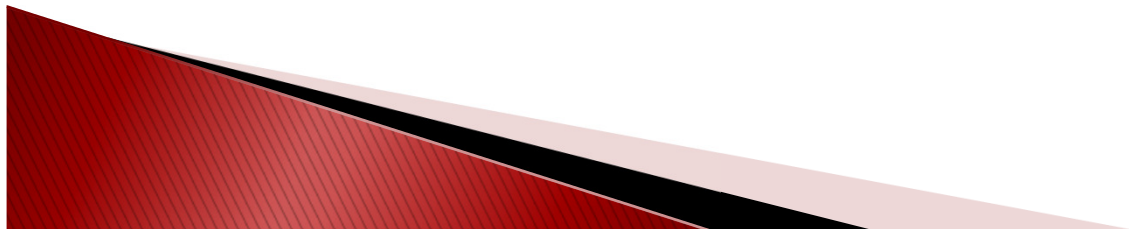
- Modelling whole language system (PODD/P2Go) for receptive and expressive communication
- Communication is multimodal
- Communication is recorded in an RHSS PCI form
- It is clear how and when teachers and significant others need to use the communication system to model linguistic competence
- Communication is recorded in an RHSS PCI form



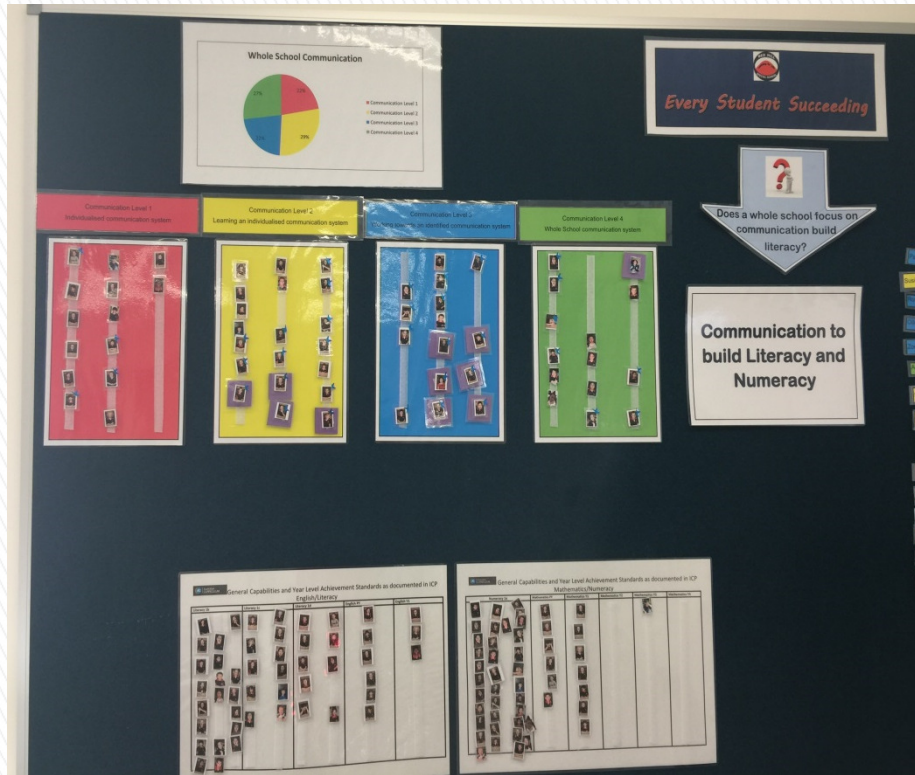
Data wall: Does a whole school focus on communication build literacy and numeracy?

Displays the following information on every student in the school:

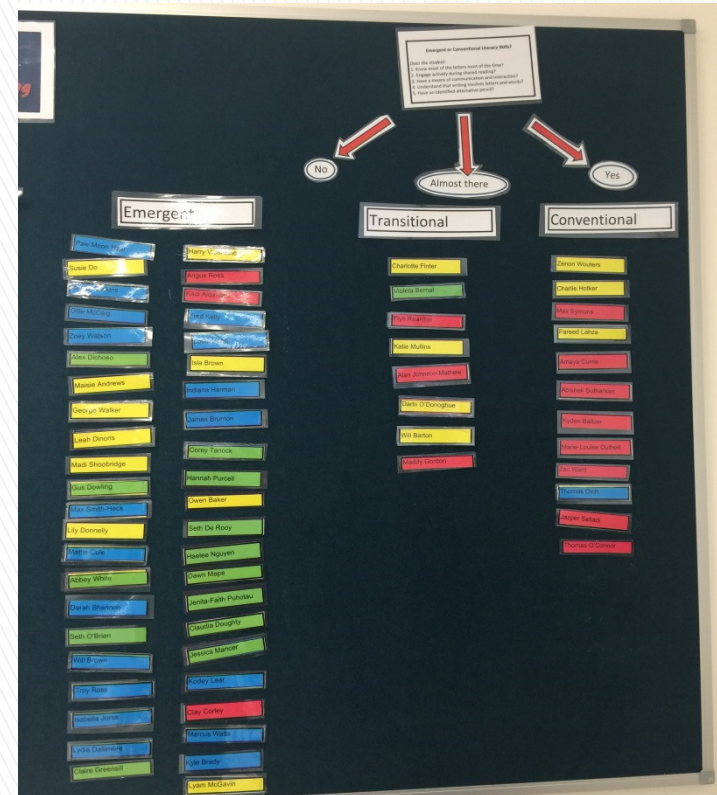
- ▶ Their communication level
- ▶ Where they are working at in relation to literacy (Emergent, transitional and conventional)
- ▶ Where they are working on the Australian Curriculum



Using the Data – Data wall



Communication Levels



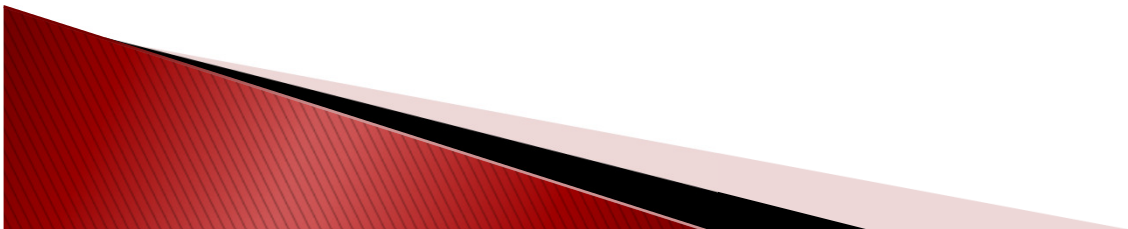
Literacy Data

Communication levels

- ▶ This data determines SLP prioritisation
- ▶ Meetings with families, SLP and teachers
- ▶ Parent Training
- ▶ Teacher Training

Literacy Data

- ▶ This data determines targeted literacy interventions
- ▶ Class programs
- ▶ Support to teachers

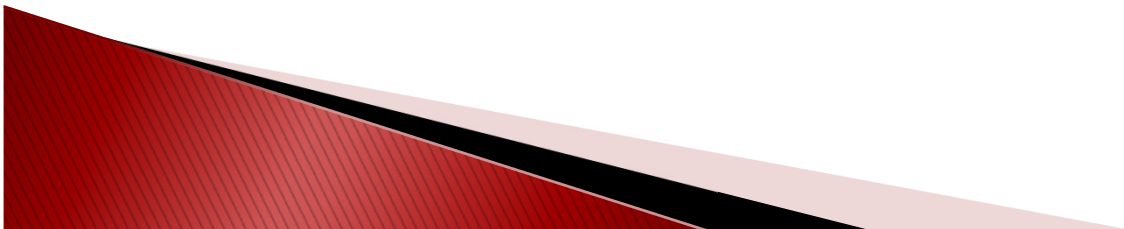




Using the Data – Data Wall

Staff Discussions – Does a whole school focus on communication build literacy and numeracy?

- ▶ Staff meetings – regular discussions of students and their data
- ▶ Individual meetings with teachers and the Leadership Team to discuss student data
- ▶ SLP uses this information to inform planning and interventions
- ▶ An overview at a glance for all staff
- ▶ It is located in the staff room so all staff can easily access the information



In summary:

Defining and using communication levels at RHSS has provided all staff with:

- ▶ a more systematic approach in which to target and support students communication
- ▶ Targeted use of school resources
- ▶ More efficient SLP prioritisation process
- ▶ A way of discussing meaningful communication data for each student
- ▶ A meaningful way to engage with families and support them in their child's communication journey (parent training and meetings)



- ▶ Having a strong focus on communication and literacy including having a school wide approach to modelling a whole language system has increased the receptive language and engagement of many of the students at school.
- ▶ We are seeing a positive effect on both staff and students.

