

February 2022

Issue 3



Inclusivity Education
BRIDGING GAPS, BUILDING FUTURES

Lets see how
this goes.

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*When is
ADHD not
ADHD?*

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INCLUSION COUNTS

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Introduction



Nazia Ansari
B.Ed. M.A.

Nazia is an Inclusive Educational Consultant and the Chairperson of the Society of Education Consultants (SEC). She is originally from Kenya and is currently based in Leicestershire, UK. While in Kenya, Nazia worked on a 1:1 basis with learners on the spectrum, as well as those with global developmental delays. She also worked as a trainer for local pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes. Her modules surrounded special education and inclusion.

Nazia continues to support families and students globally. Specifically, she develops bespoke programmes and provides regular ongoing support. Locally, she works with the students and the school, developing tailor-made programmes and supporting the resourcing of learning activities for each learner.

Hello!

As we continue to support families across the globe, the Covid-19 Pandemic is presenting completely opposite situations from one country to the next, which means that Inclusivity Education must remain flexible in meeting the needs of students, irrespective of their situation.

While measures gradually relax in the UK, they have become stricter in Kenya, which means that children in the UK are back at school and will soon be able to attend after school activities, but students in Kenya are back to online learning.

Fortunately, we have been here before and we managed to pull through - and we will do the same this year. Please have a look at the resources page on our website and you will be able to find plenty of information on how to support your child, whether we need structure at home or if we need to prepare them for Covid tests.

Inclusivity Education is always looking for ways to support and advocate for neurodiverse learners. Please reach out to us on inclusivityeducation@gmail.com

I look forward to hearing from you!

Nazia Ansari



Updates



By Nazia Ansari

It has been nearly a year since our last issue and a busy one it has been! We have some exciting updates to share with you.

Orton Gillingham

I am now working toward my Associate Level Orton Gillingham certificate and this has been an eye opening experience.

One of the fundamentals to teaching literacy to neurodiverse learners is to separate the skills. This means that we need to understand that spelling is a different skill to composing a story; similarly word reading is a different skill to comprehension. We need to work on these in isolation and gradually bring them together. We too often pressure students to get it all right at the first try and this can be incredibly taxing for a neurodiverse learner.

Learning about the Orton Gillingham Approach reinforces this even more and I am hopeful that I will soon be able to offer this programme to clients in the near future.

Trip to Kenya

I was able to make a trip to Kenya in December 2021 and managed to see clients and do a training on various aspects of inclusion such as literacy, role of executive functioning in education and 6 I's of inclusion. We also took a glimpse at a one to one fade out plan that I am in the process of developing.

Advocacy

As I continue to work with neurodiverse learners, there are always matters that arise that I feel we all need to be aware of and as a consultant, I tend to advocate for my learners. Sometimes this involves sharing my perspective with which everyone may not agree. However, I encourage you all to carefully consider what I put forward and if need be, engage in a respectful and healthy debate. The purpose of these posts is to bring about awareness and inspire a change in practice and I hope all readers will join me in Redefining Inclusion

Redefining Inclusion

This is a training initiative that I have been doing in partnership with the highly experienced Scilla Allen. We will soon be offering our Module 1 which we have run a few times in the past 2 years.

Module 2 is based on the training I offered in Nairobi which we are currently reviewing.

Scilla is in the process of developing module 3.

Please keep a look out for these training sessions!



When is ADHD not ADHD?



By Scilla Allen

Scilla Allen M.Ed. PGC has over 35 years experience in mainstream and special education, working in the International and British education systems, mostly within Kenya. She has a Masters in Special Education, a Post graduate certificate in psychology, an assessment practicing certificate and is registered with the British Psychological Society as a specialist assessor. Scilla is currently working on a Phd. in Educational Psychology.

<https://www.eftenterprise.com/>

As an assessor, I am often asked to assess a student 'just' for ADHD. Perhaps because there are no apparent academic or behavioural concerns. I always insist that even a screener for a base line needs to be done, and if possible a more comprehensive assessment if they can. Why? Because too often the assumption that the problem is an attention issue is misguided and misinformed. Not intentionally of course, but we focus on the 'product' i.e. the behaviour, without checking carefully for the cause.

What could it be instead? Well, a slow processing speed is a common culprit. Where a student is asked a question and when they look up in a distracted or dazed manner, we assume they were not paying attention when the question was asked. In fact, they were paying attention - plenty of it, but with a slow processing speed, they may be a step or two behind still. So, when you say, 'Open your math book, turn to page 65 and look at question A. Mary, how would you do this problem?' 'Mary's blank look may be because she is still at 'open your text book' Not because she is not paying attention, but because her processing speed is different to others.

Or it could be a problem with executive functioning. This also impacts on processing and organization. A child challenged by executive functioning, may struggle to initiate an activity - not because they are being distracted, but because they have an executive dysfunction. Planning, transitions, understanding cause and effect, initiating an action are all easy if your executive functioning is working well, but a nightmare if it is not.

ADHD may also reflect learned habits, or be impacted by parenting styles. And remember, that ADHD is really a dysregulation rather than a deficit - sometimes a student with ADHD may struggle with too much attention such as when they are on a video game - just because they can focus for hours in this situation, doesn't mean they don't have ADHD -

A comprehensive assessment, including a developmental history, a core ability and processing profile, and observation in different situations will all add to the diagnosis.

Knowledge is power, so be careful not to assume that you know what is going on. An assessment can flag up many unexpected surprises that can inform intervention and the way forward.



Lets see how this goes



My inclusion story starts with my son's first visit to school when he was just about to turn 3. We noticed that he was not able to speak and that he was not yet toilet trained, so when we went to the school they promised to handle all that. Little did we know that he was in for a nasty experience. The caregivers would not take him to the toilet because they said he was not able to tell them when he needed to go. Nobody talked to him all day. He would spend the day alone.

“ Our second stop ”

Our second stop was another school where they promised that they would take good care of him. They did the best they could, but after washing soiled clothes every day for more than a year the teacher understandably got tired, and 'moved on', as we say in Kenya. She let him be. He would refuse to write, hold the pencil, etc. and she would leave him to rock on the chair until it was time to play or go home.

Note that at this time we were yet to get a diagnosis. We were in denial.

“ Our third stop ”

Our third stop was better, as that is where he is at present. The teachers took one look at him and said they would take him in. It was not easy, but with time they got him to write, say a few words, and even play with other children. Though he was much older than his classmates, the kids treated him like one of their own. He fitted in and he was loved by all.

It is while we were at the third school that we got to know he was autistic.

Where are we at now? Well, we are faced with thoughts about the future. What happens as he progresses into primary school where things are a bit more serious? He is already there, and we can see that things have changed. He is still included, but the nature of the curriculum poses challenges to him and the teaching staff. Clearly inclusion goes beyond just accepting and loving the child.

Let's see how this goes.



By Alison Kiriinya



Redefining Inclusion Course



While working in inclusion, we are always looking for opportunities to:

- Collaborate with other professionals
- Create awareness among teachers
- Empower parents
- Advocate for learners

Inclusivity Education has partnered with Scilla Allen, Efti Enterprises in achieving this. We have run trainings under the joint initiative titled Redefining Inclusion.

Over the past two years, we have been fortunate to be able to train teachers and parents in Malaysia, India, Egypt, Tanzania and Kenya.

We typically open the course to a very limited number of participants as this allows us to support those who we are training.

The aim of our first module is to inform parents and teacher about how neurodiverse learners learn and all the elements that often go unnoticed such as memory, executive functioning, self regulation, socialisation and communication.

We are value driven and therefore, are particular about ensuring participants receive maximum benefit from our sessions.

Participants will receive:

- Weekly open office sessions
- Membership into a closed Facebook group
- 5% discount on an educational assessment by Scilla Allen
- Certification at the end of the training (Subject to participants completing course work)

Dates: 5th April 2022 to 24th May 2022

Every Tuesday from 5:00pm to 7:00pm BST

Fee: £200 (50% deposit payable)

Register on
<https://inclusivity.education/redefining-inclusion/>

Course outline

Week 1

Orientation and 8 principles of inclusion

Week 2

Academic Progress

Week 3

PAGS(R)

Week 4

Academic Achievement

Week 5

Sensory Processing

Week 6

Memory

Week 7

Executive Functioning

Week 8

Changing Mindsets



RDI and Inclusion



Meghna Visaria has been teaching neurodiverse learners for 8 years now. She started off as a remedial/special educator for children with LD. As an Relationship Development Intervention (RDI) Consultant she works with parents of children with special needs, practicing in the African continent.

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RDI (Relationship Development Intervention) is an internationally-recognized program that focuses on developing a meaningful relationship between the child and their primary caregivers through activities based on competence, regulation, and joint attention. It is a family-focused program that teaches the parents the skills they need to develop instrumental interactions that their child might lose out on due to the overfocus on the superficial symptoms of his/her disability (RDICoNECT Inc, 2020)

While creating an enriching and mindful home environment, as a Consultant, I also advocate for the child to receive education and social interaction in an inclusive or integrated setting. My belief is that as soon as the family finds a school or organization that meets their expectations and is willing to go the extra mile for the growth of their child, they should enroll him/her. Providing therapy or intervention in isolation may not always lead to application in the real world.

In my practice, I often encounter situations where parents and professionals struggle with understanding why their child is able to perform a skill during therapy but not in their day to day lives. The answer to this is based on understanding the difference between rote learning and application. If the child can make a 3-4 word sentence about a picture, but not say the same words when they see the objects from the picture in a different location, he/she hasn't learned to apply the skill. He/she has simply mastered a rote response. It is important to make this distinction so that we can support learners in being able to utilize the skills they learn

Another observation that is overlooked is the value of incidental learning. When the child is in a room full of other children his/her age, they are exposed to aspects of learning and development that they could incidentally learn, for example, standing in a line or passing a book. Some might think, 'aren't we throwing the child in the deep end!' If a child does learn from his/her peers, then we need not interfere with this natural learning path.

However, that does not necessarily mean that the child is entirely at par with his/her peers. This is where the caregivers and professionals come in - to identify the areas that the child is struggling with and fill the gaps.

Social gaps need to be filled in addition to gaps in academic learning and development of life skills. Many families are uncomfortable taking their child to public places like a supermarket or social events like a birthday party, afraid their child might misbehave. However, I encourage them to work on this goal if it gives their child happiness. Through training in the RDI Family Consultation Program, the parents are empowered to 'guide' their child in these uncertain settings by building on their self regulation and co-regulation skills. The goal will always be to prepare your child for activities that make him/her happy.