

Executive Function in School Students with Learning Difficulties:

How can occupational therapy make a difference?

Expressions of Interest Sought

Semester 1, 2020 – Melbourne/Brisbane

Executive function skills are the core set of cognitive skills required for planning, carrying out and evaluating the completion of tasks, as well as overseeing our communication exchanges. They include skills that typically control behaviour (ie response inhibition/ emotional control, attention, task initiation and persistence); as well as the higher level cognitive skills (referred to as metacognition) that guide behaviour (ie planning, organising, monitoring, reasoning, problem solving and flexibility). Students with learning difficulties, are often challenged by deficits with regard to their executive function skills, that contribute to their performance across a variety of school-based occupations. These include:

- effective participation in their roles as learner, worker, self-carer, friend, community member or creative performer
- engagement in the occupations they need / want to do across academic, social and emotional domains
- the ability to effectively apply strategic approaches to occupational performance in the 'here and now' of everyday school routines

Occupational therapists working in strong partnership with teachers are able to maximise learning opportunities for these students through scaffolded and systematic instructional approaches.

Aims/Objectives

Using an occupational performance framework, and applying the Perceive Recall Plan and Perform (PRPP) System of Task Analysis, this practical workshop will

- enable occupational therapists to systematically and effectively address the functional needs of children who have difficulty with
 - academic skills
 - social skills for making and keeping friends
 - emotional skills for self-regulating feelings and being resilient
- address key principles of context based assessment
- provide a strategic intervention approach which supports engagement and provides tools for children to be strategic learners
- guide occupational therapists to design an intervention which builds executive function capacities
- support a collaborative approach for occupational therapists to work in authentic partnership with classroom teachers

NB- previous PRPP experience is not a pre-requisite for this workshop, as an overview of the framework theory and approach relative to this population will be provided to assist participants to utilise the concepts in practice. For those interested, pre-reading can be provided to assist development of these foundation skills prior to the workshop.

Arrival tea/coffee, morning tea, afternoon tea and lunch provided. This workshop is open to occupational therapists.

About the Presenter

Dr Chris Chapparo PhD, MA, DipOT is widely recognised on an international level for her contributions to occupational therapy through teaching, research and community service activities. Dr Chapparo has co-authored the Occupational Performance Model (Australia). Dr Chapparo has interests in cognition, management of sensory/ motor problems in children and adults and occupational therapy theory. Dr Chapparo is a founding member of Sensory Integration International and the Australian SI Faculty and she is a neurodevelopmental therapy instructor. Her research interests lie in the areas of children's information processing and social participation.

Expressions of Interest for this workshop are now being sought. Please register your interest by emailing Zi Mei Events at info@zimei.com.au or (07) 3358 3689.