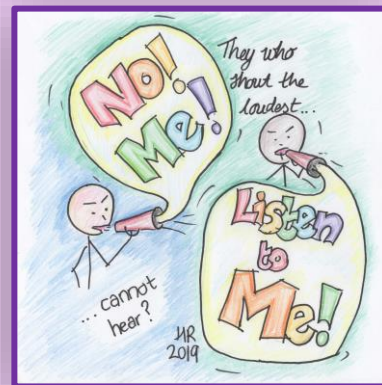


# Building Bridges between Home and School for Students with SEND

Dr Helen Ross



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# Overview

- The expectation gap – what parents expect versus what teachers deliver
- The gap- why do teachers' and parents' expectations differ?
- COVID- different groups' experiences of schooling
- What can we learn?
  - Agency and flexibility
  - Shared understandings
  - What we want for our learners.

# The Roots of Our Expectations- an overview

- When supporting young people with SEND, the local authority “must have regard to the... views, wishes and feelings of the child and his or her parent...”<sup>1</sup>
- Articles 28 and 29 from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: right to an education which develops their skills and talents.<sup>2</sup>
- SEND Code of Practice<sup>3</sup> states that young people and their families must be consulted in decision making processes relating to needs.
- But... needs should be met in the classroom<sup>4</sup>

1: The Children and Families Act 2014. London: The Stationary Office

2: UN General Assembly (1989) ‘*Convention on the Rights of the Child*’, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1577, (online) available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b38f0.html> [Accessed 1 June 2021]

3: Department for Education (DfE) (2015) ‘Special educational needs and disability code of

practice: 0 to 25 years’. [online]. Available:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/398815/SEND\\_Code\\_of\\_Practice\\_January\\_2015.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf) (Accessed 15 February 2021)

4: Department for Education (DfE) (2010a) *Support and Aspiration: A New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability*. A Consultation. London: DfE

# What do parents expect?

- My work shows that parents largely expect ‘human’ input to support their children
  - Teaching Assistants: in-class and for small-group support
  - Removal from class for support
- Differentiation by teachers: parents’ views
  - For the 40% of parents<sup>1</sup> who knew, many strategies were cited.
  - Small-scale study shows that 60% of parents do not know how or if teachers adapt work for their children<sup>2</sup>.
- Foundations are laid for ‘The Gap’...

1 and 2: Ross, H. (2020) 'The COVID-19 School Closures: Effects on Learning and Teaching for Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.' [Online] Available: <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/5464/pdf/> (Accessed 15 February 2021)

# What do teachers/educators do?

- In-class support
  - 37% of teachers deployed an adult in class- either to take notes or as specific support for students
  - Tech was the first port of call: 79% of teachers use dyslexia-friendly PowerPoints/Presentations
  - Copies of notes and discussions were frequently cited by teachers
  - Extra time and multi-sensory resources commonly used.

# Different Expectations & Missed understandings

- Low-key support strategies
  - Teachers are keen to make support streamlined and subtle for students<sup>1</sup>
  - Students want low-key, subtle support
  - Parents want clarity and obvious differentiation strategies<sup>1</sup>

1: Ross, H (2020) *“It’s a Battle!”: Parenting and Supporting a Child with Dyslexia* In *Dyslexia* by J. Glazzard (ed) (forthcoming book). DOI: 10.5772/intechopen.93948

# Parenting & Teaching in remote-learning

- Roles
  - Parent-educators- “needs a teacher to guide him” (secondary school parent)
  - Teachers as differentiators and facilitators
- Expectations
  - Parents are at home & can do home-schooling
  - Access to devices
  - Curricular demands and expectations- reading
- Ways of working and communication
  - Devices and training are need!
  - Motivations for communications linked to failure

“It has been almost impossible. We have very limited access to devices”

Secondary School Parent

“...Both my husband and I are working full time still (my husband goes out to work, so I am working full time at home whilst homeschooling 2 children).”

Primary School Parent

# Post-COVID thoughts: new ways forward

- Increased agency and flexibility for working/communication
- Use of home-made video/audio clips
- Differentiation
  - increased awareness for teachers
  - Use of technology

“Relationships are key to life & so important. Maybe more important than grades and results. I am an Elsa and a mental health first aider & now a thrive practitioner & therefore to me the welfare and happiness of the student is paramount.”

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# Building Bridges: The Classroom Practicalities

- School SEND Reports
- Talk things through with parents
- Talk to young people
- Review progress, impact and sustainability of interventions
- Can tech be used for more targeted support, long-term?
- Build in movement towards independence in support for young people

# Building Bridges- Future Moves

- Training
  - Teachers often don't have formal training on supporting Specific Learning Difficulties or other neurodiversities
  - Build a bank of knowledge in your teams to support common learning difficulties.
- Building channels and strategies for communication
- Partnership with parents
- Empowering young people to articulate their views
- Work with school stakeholders to articulate 'reasonable adjustments' and what they look like in your setting: set clear expectations for parents and actions for teachers

# Building Bridges

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