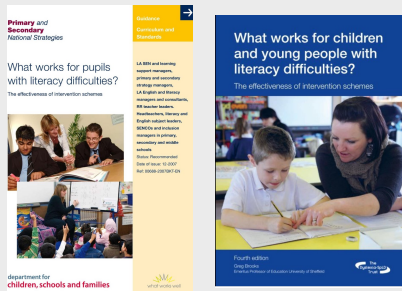


TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION AND INFERENCE TO CHILDREN ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

Inference training for Autism | Rawlins Academy | Friday 6 March 2020

There is a growing body of literature that suggests that autistic students often present with a specific reading profile that involves adequate or good decoding alongside a weakness in comprehension. Inference is often highlighted as a particular area of difficulty. To date, studies investigating potential interventions to address these reading comprehension challenges have been limited.

Inference Training for Autism



The Leicester Inference Training (Whatmuff, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016), based on the work of Yuill and Oakhill (1988) is a group intervention that addresses the difficulties faced by students who decode at an age appropriate level but demonstrate relative weaknesses in reading comprehension.



Inference training demonstrates key comprehension strategies through “instructional conversations” in groups to help boost reading comprehension. Through reading and interactive discussions, the group:

- Activate and apply prior knowledge to their reading and use title cues to predict
- Identify key words and elaborate on them to enhance meaning, and develop vocabulary
- Generate their own questions and answer them
- Generate inferences and integrate meaning as they read to build a gist
- Summarise a short text extract using visualisation, quick pictures, picto-words and a 10 word or less headline
- Retell an extract to emphasise the gist

From its conception the Inference Training Manual has included autism specific strategies. Inference training featured in both the 2007, m2013 and 2016 editions of Professor Greg Brook’s study “*What Works for children and young people with literacy difficulties*”. Both editions identified inference training as an intervention that offers **significant gains for pupils with weak comprehension skills**. The 2016 edition included research by Emma Kehoe on Inference Training for children with autism, the outcomes of which Brooks describes as **remarkable**. Most recently Emma has conducted research in



Delivered by Emma Kehoe



How to book;

Spaces are limited so early booking is advised

- Cost: Course - £115 per delegate.
Inference Training Manual - £65.50 (+PP) if required.
- When: Friday 6 March 2020
- Where: Rawlins Academy,
Loughborough Road,
Quorn, Loughborough,
Leicestershire LE12 8DY
- To book: Contact Katie Dowdall on 01509 622 800 x278 or e-mail:
KatieDowdall@rawlinsacademy.org.uk
- Payment: Invoiced



mainstream primary and secondary schools, unit and specialist provisions and special schools over a three year period. The findings indicate that taking part in a twelve session Inference Training group, over six to twelve weeks increased autistic students reading age by an **average of 25.5 months**. Both teachers and students felt that the intervention also helped develop confidence in social communication and group work.

Emma Kehoe

Emma has worked in education with young people on the autism spectrum for more than 20 years. She has taught in mainstream and special schools and across all age groups. Emma has been an autism outreach teacher and head of an autism outreach service. She has worked for the National Autistic Society and for 20 years has been a tutor for the University of Birmingham (autism children's course). Emma has also contributed to a number of autism practice publications and has worked on the Leicester City Inference Training programme with Tony Whatmuff from the beginning.

Course Components

The course is suitable for mainstream and special schools who wish to develop the comprehension and inference skills of children with communication and interaction differences. The children should be able to decode and have a reading **age of 6 years and above**.

The day comprises of:

- Information on the barriers to comprehension and inference that struggling readers may experience.
- The impact that autism may have on a child's ability to comprehend text
- Autism specific adaptations to the Inference Training model
- Clear guidelines on how to run an Inference Training group.

Outcomes

After the training participants will:

- Understand the barriers and areas of difficulty children with autism have when reading for meaning and understanding inference.
- Understand how to address these challenges through the Inference Training for Autism Programme
- Know how to plan and run the Inference training sessions and practice delivering a session.
- Access the resources and order resources if required.