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PMLD LINK

The Bulletin of News and Information for Everyone Working with People with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties

CONTENTS

PMLD LINK relies on contributions from practitioners, parents, carers and everyone interested in this field

EDITORIAL

SPRING 1995

First of all, apologies for the lateness of this issue of PMLD-Link. I will not give excuses, but you will notice that it is even bigger than ever, and I hope that you will find it worth waiting for.

In this *International Issue* we have departed from our tradition of focusing on practical issues in working with people with PMLD. We have been sent contributions from many parts of the world telling us about work overseas from a number of different perspectives, from the very general to the very particular. Denise Iversen and Shirley Culpan from New Zealand have taken forward the theme of sensory work in the Autumn issue in their description of how they set up a sensory room, and the topic is further expanded with some very useful information and advice in an article by Niki Seel.

Many thanks to all those who wrote for this issue, and all those readers who contacted friends and colleagues to ask for articles. We hope that people working in other countries will continue to write in with news and information about all aspects of their own work, and about provision for both children and adults in their country.

Next Issue: This will be focusing on 'the spiritual dimension'. The obligation to include Religious Education and daily collective worship in schools makes this topic important to all who work with children with PMLD to ensure that the experiences we provide in these areas offer our pupils experiences which are of value. Without considering this dimension of the lives of people we are working with or caring for, whatever age they are, we are in danger of limiting everything to prosaic, practical and functional activities. There is more to life than this, but it can be difficult for us to imagine how it may be experienced by people with PMLD.

Although there are a number of resources relating generally to religious education and assemblies, only few of them deal with the meaning of these for people with PMLD (Goss 1992, Longhorn 1993). I am sure that many readers would welcome the ideas of others on this subject.

The 'spiritual dimension' can be interpreted in many ways, and not just in terms of religious experiences. Flo Longhorn refers to a 'deeper dimension'. How we interpret this will necessarily be based, in part at least, on our personal belief system. We hope that those of you who have spent time thinking about this deeper dimension, the inner lives, feelings, emotions and spiritual needs of the people you work with will share your thoughts, and the ways you have found to support this aspect of your work, with all our readers.

Please send articles, information, requests etc. for the Summer issue by mid-June, so that the next PMLD-Link will not be as late as this one!

Carol Ouvry

THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH SEVERE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES:
An Experience of Integration in Portugal

ABSTRACT

Special schools are largely the provision for children with severe learning difficulties in a number of countries. The underlying issue, however, is being discussed and a new approach is emerging. This paper describes the main aspects of an experience of integration of children with severe learning difficulties in Portugal. In particular, the experience is based on special classes set up in regular schools of the first cycle of basic education, and the childrn involved are in the age range six to sixteen. 'The curriculum is directed to the needs of children and due to individualized instruction a staff complement is provided for. Parents' involvement receives a great deal of attention, and direct intervention in the child's schooling and in the classroom activities is encouraged. Finally, the extension of this experience to schools of the second and third cycles of basic education is thought to be an answer to the question that arises from the age range of the pupils involved in the experience, since the average pupil leaves the school of the first cycle at the age of ten.

INTRODUCTION

Although integration is the guidng principle that informs the present policy of special education in Portugal, specialist provision for children with severe learning diffiuclties has been traditionally centred on special schools.

The benefits claimed for the education of those children in special schools has been based mainly, as Hegarty and Pocklington (1982) state, on the concentration of resources and trained staff that allows a level of attention that would not be practicable in ordinary schools. In recent years, however, this kind of provision has been discussed in terms of facing its drawbacks and in considering alternatives, favouring the advent of a new approach to making suitable educational provision for children with severe learning difficulties.

In Portugal, this new approach gave rise to an interesting experience of integration. In fact, the option for special classes in ordinary schools rather than special school provision for children with severe learning difficulties emerged in some places, particularly in the Northern part of the country. These special classes are attached to schools of the first cycle of basic education (formerly primary schools) and the extent of integration is in accordance with the specific characteristics of the children involved.

PERMANENT SUPPORT CLASSES (SAP)

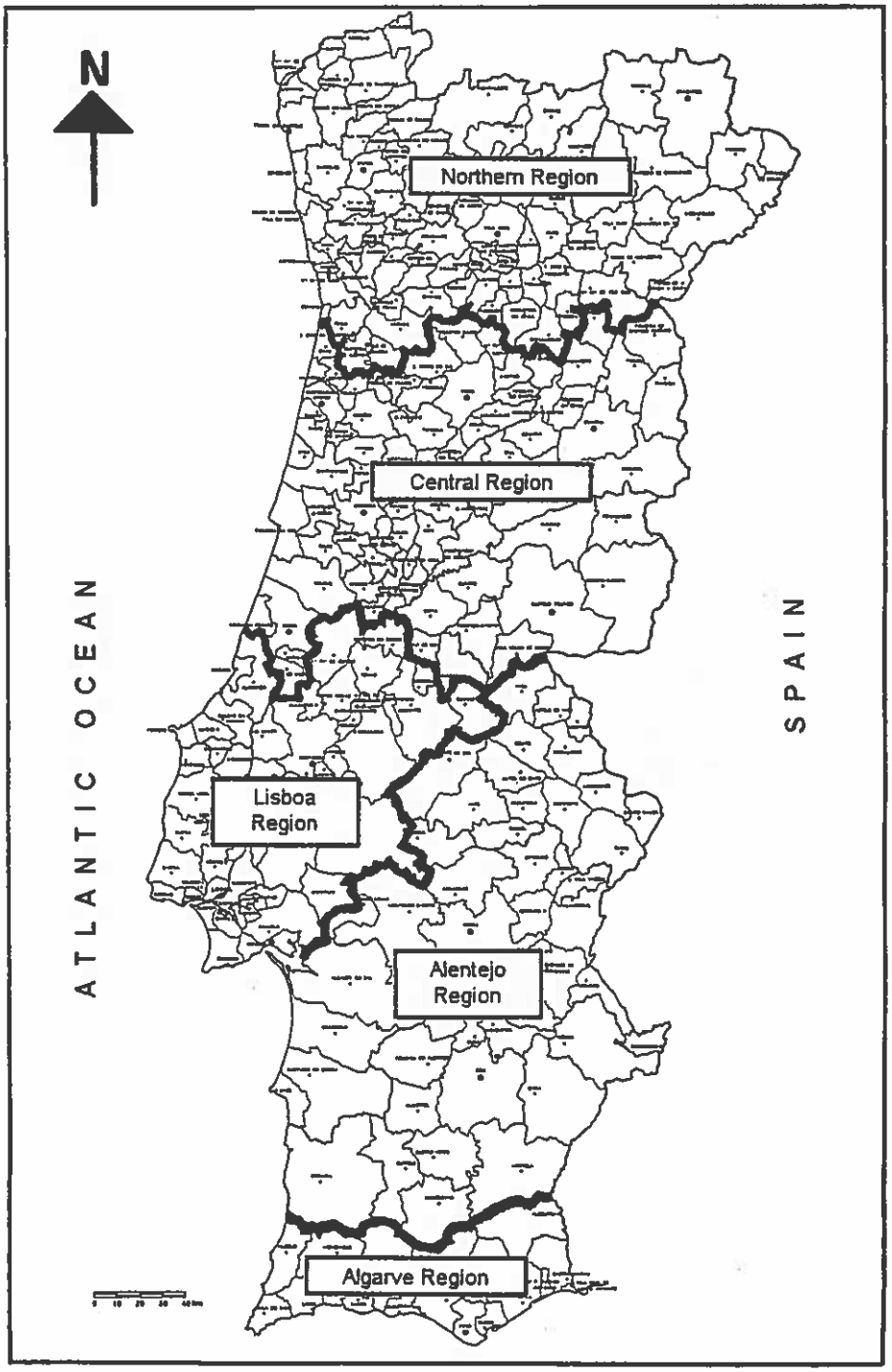
The experience of integration of children with severe learning difficulties started in 1982, with the setting up of the first special class in a school of the first cycle of basic education. This school is ;situated in Porto and belongs to the Northern Educational Region which is one of the five regions that Portugal is divided into for the purposes of education (Figure 1). Since then, a number of similar classes have opened, in all cases attached to schools of the first cycle of basic education.

These classes are known as "permanent support classses" (Salas de Apoio Permanente-SAP) because children have full-time education in a special class with only social contact with the main school. At present, according to an informal study, there are seventy four SAP in the Northern Educational Region and another three are expected to open in the academic year of 1995/96. It is worthy of note that in the other four educational regions there are just a few SAP, fewer than ten in all.

Pupils

In the SAP there are children who have profound retardation or multiple impairment who, in general, are aged between six and sixteen. The age range six to sixteen corresponds to the age of compulsory education for the *average* pupil. In fact, the present education system in Portugal which was introduced by the Education Act of 1986, features nine years of compulsory education from the age of six (Figure 2). These nine years of basic education are

Figure 1 —The Five Educational Regions of Portugal (Northern, Central, Lisboa, Alentejo and Algarve)



divided into three cycles: the first cycle of four years, the second of two years, and the final cycle of three years.

In the above context, three relevant periods may be considered as far as the education of children with severe learning difficulties in SAP is concerned: before the age of six (i.e. before entering the SAP); between six and sixteen (i.e. education in the SAP); and beyond the age of sixteen (i.e. after leaving the SAP).

In Portugal, a considerable number of children with severe learning difficulties are still not included in educational programmes before the age of six. However, more and more children are benefiting from those programmes every year. Most of these children are served in an institutional setting or stay at home and receive the support of a home visiting teacher. Only a few are integrated in regular pre-school programmes. In all cases, the instruction tends to be largely or even wholly individualised.

The children in the age range six to sixteen are usually educated in the SAP whenever this sort of provision exists. However, a number of exceptions are found as far as either the entering age or the leaving age is concerned. For example, children with severe learning difficulties usually remain in the SAP until the reach the *average* school leaving age, but there are pupils who leave the SAP at the age of fourteen and others who stay until the age of eighteen. The reasons for these different situations are not clear, and may not be strictly in connection with educational issues.

Beyond the age of sixteen the need for continued education allied to social and vocational training has been recognised to an extent in Portugal, but again, it is still far from a reality. After leaving the SAP only a very few pupils have the possibility of further education in adult training centres which are usually run by parents' associations. Most of the time however, the pupils return home and the support is eventually stopped.

Curriculum

The integration of children with special educational needs in ordinary schools in Portugal is regulated by the Special Education Act 1991 (Law No.319). In the case of children with severe learning difficulties, Heward and Orlansky (1984) stress that their highly specialised needs make placement in a regular classroom unlikely. However, these authors also indicate that if those pupils are educated in regular schools they have opportunities to come into contact with their non-handicapped peers and it is widely assumed that these interactions will result in improved social relationships between handicapped and non-handicapped children. In addition, teachers who have been working in SAP also strongly believe that children with severe learning difficulties will acquire some of the normal modes of behaviour by which they are surrounded and as a result they may improve their social skills in an easier way.

In the SAP, the regular contact between the teachers and the pupils from the SAP and the other children and teachers in the school is usually achieved through planned visits of the latter to the special class. On certain occasions, the involvement of the pupils from the SAP in out-of-class activities is also considered and encouraged.

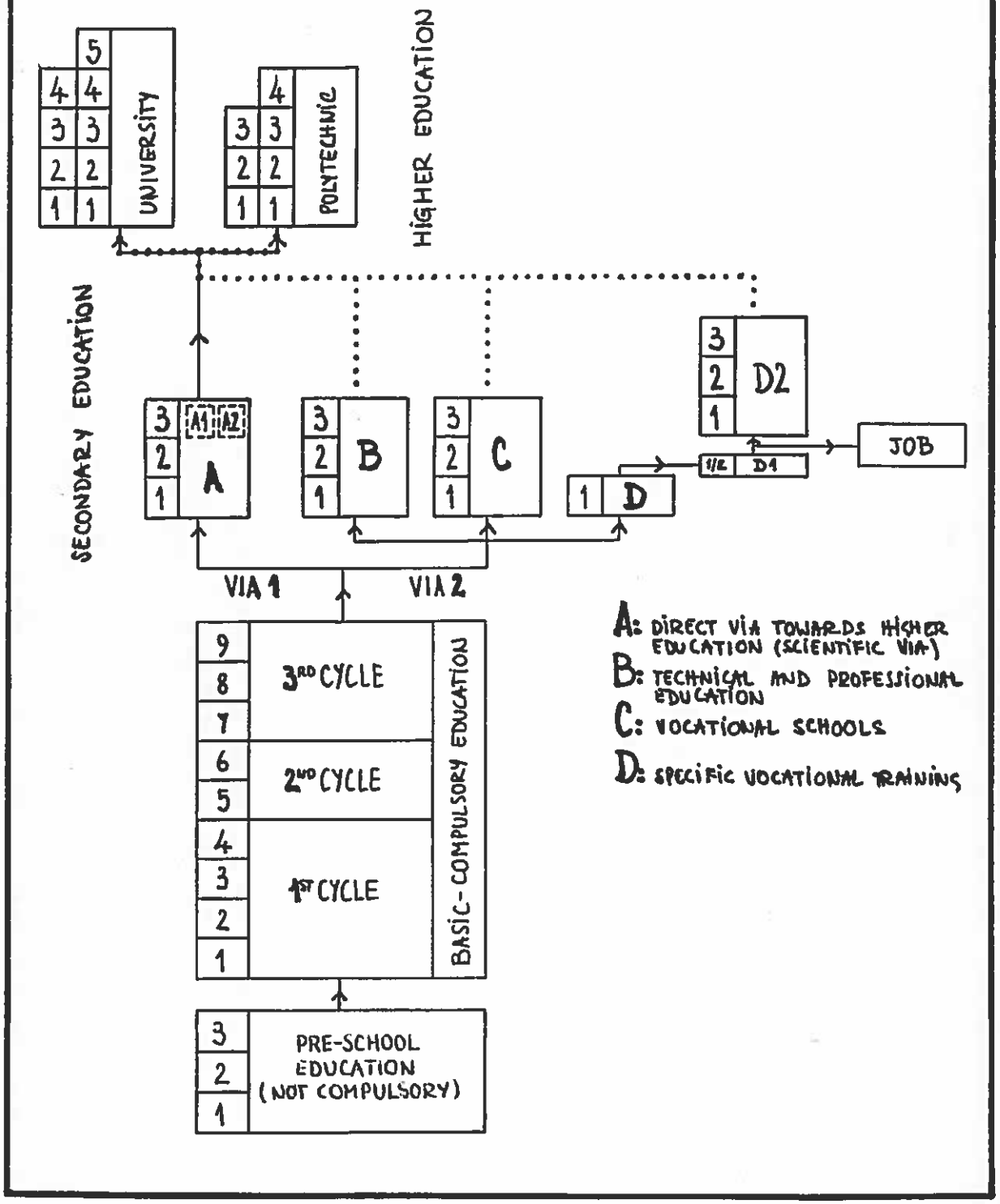
In the Special Education Act 1991, the possibility of "alternative curricula" for the children with severe learning difficulties is explicitly considered. Those special curricula may have little or no reference to the regular curriculum. As the SAP enjoy more autonomy than any other class in the schools, decisions about curriculum rest, in all cases, with the teacher who co-ordinates the work in the class. In general, the teacher seeks to provide a mixture of group and individualised instruction emphasizing practical tasks for living in the community (Figure 3).

Apart from socialisation and behaviour, the other specific content areas of the curriclum are mainly related to self-care, communication, motor skills, safety, leisure and recreational skills and functional academics.

Staffing

The SAP are staffed generously. Each class usually has a teacher of the first cycle of basic education, a pre-school teacher and one or two assistants with no specific training for an averave of six to seven pupils. Sometimes, due to the characteristics of the pupils but also due to occasional administrative restrictions, one may find only teachers in these classes.

Figure 2 —The Education System in Portugal After 1986



For example, in the SAP of Barcelos, towards the Northeast of Porto, there are four teachers (one primary school teacher and three pre-school teachers) in charge of five pupils.

The advantages of such a favourable staffing complement are obviously to facilitate the highly individualised approach which is followed and to encourage flexibility in teaching. Integration is then achieved and its main benefit envisaged as social.

The teachers that work in the SAP are part of the special education teams of the geographical area in question. In the selection process priority is given to teachers who are specialised in working with children with special educational needs. Whenever it is impossible to meet this requirement, teachers are expected at least, to have, a good teaching practice.

Parents

In Portugal, parents of children with severe learning difficulties are supposed to be helped and trained at home in order to teach their children specific skills. This kind of help and support is always very important but clearly it may be decisive when children are not included in educational programmes until the age of six. In this case, there is no doubt that parents can contribute substantially to their children's early development and education.

On the other hand, the involvement of parents in the SAP has received a great deal of attention. Sometimes the home visits are not discontinued even when the child has already joined the special class. However, in these circumstances, it is more common that parents come to meetings in the school premises from time to time.

At present, parents and teachers are trying to develop better ways of working together for the benefit of these children. In fact, paretns have been encouraged to involve themselves directly in their child's schooling and in helping out in the classroom. In this context, some parents have been helping teachers during meal-tijes and also with the organisation and tidying up of the rooms.

CONCLUSION

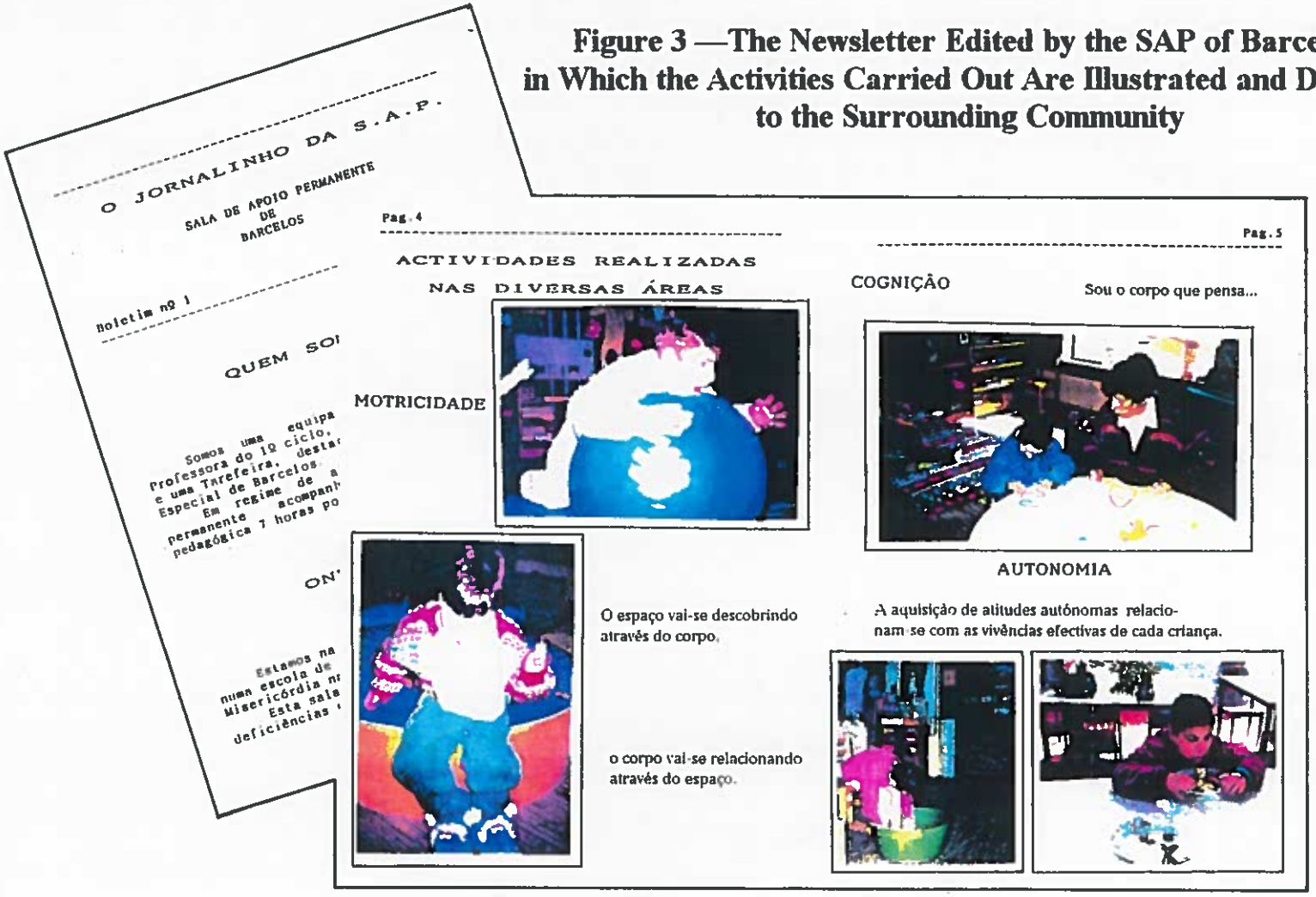
The regular schools, which until recently excluded most severely handicapped children, are now beginning to provide educational opportunities for them on a large scale, as Heward and Orlansky (1984) point out. In Portugal, the "permanent support classes" (SAP) set up in ordinarly schools of the first cycle of basic education are gaining acceptance as an appropriate placement for many children with severe learning diffiuclties. However, as the Warnock Report (1978) emphasizes, every effort must be made to ensure that the special class is actually an integral part of the school in question.

Unfortuately, despite the fact that the experience of integration of children with severe learning difficulties in the SAP started in 1982, no formal evaluation has been done so far by the educational authorities. Nevertheless, most of the teachers involved in the SAP believe that it has been a very positive experience and the benefits of the social integration clearly relevant. On the other hand, in a few SAP where teachers have been making an effort to evaluate their work more extensively, there are indications that the difference of ages between the pupils in the special class and the other pupils in the school might, to a certain extent, be problematic. This has been addressed cautiously, and the possibility of setting up special classes in schools of the second and third cycles is apparently being considered.

The experience of the SAP in Portugal, particularly in the Northern part of the country, is an interesting one which may offer a great deal of practical elements to a new approach to making suitable educational provision for children with severe learning difficulties. In fact, the Regional Educational Authorities should look at the experience with further attention and implement adequate means for its evaluation in order to minimise eventual problems, improve the instruction provided to help pupils to become as self-sufficient and socially acceptable as possible, and develop and encourage awareness and acceptance of severely handicapped indivuduals by the surrounding community.

Acknowledgements: Sincere thanks to Barry Carpenter for the invitation and encouragement to write this paper and for the kindness of reviewing it.

Figure 3 —The Newsletter Edited by the SAP of Barcelos, in Which the Activities Carried Out Are Illustrated and Divulged to the Surrounding Community



O JORNALINHO DA S.A.P.

SALA DE APOIO PERMANENTE DE BARCELOS

Boletim nº 1

QUEM SO

Somos uma equipa
Professora do 1º ciclo,
e uma Tarefeira, destac
Especial de Barcelos
Em regime de a
permanente acompanh
pedagógica 7 horas po

ON

Estamos na
numa escola de
Misericórdia n
Esta sala
deficiências

Pag. 4

ACTIVIDADES REALIZADAS NAS DIVERSAS ÁREAS

MOTRICIDADE

O espaço vai-se descobrindo através do corpo.

o corpo vai-se relacionando através do espaço.

Pag. 5

COGNIÇÃO

Sou o corpo que pensa...

AUTONOMIA

A aquisição de atitudes autónomas relacionam-se com as vivências efectivas de cada criança.

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EDUCATION IN NOVA SCOTIA, CANADA

with a focus on the services provided by Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) through the Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired (RCVI) Halifax, Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia is Canada's most easterly mainland province and is surrounded by water except for a 22km boundary with New Brunswick. A long and narrow province, the road trip from end to end is a journey of over 850km, yet this represents only 0.6% of Canada's total land mass. The population of Nova Scotia is approximately 900,000 which is 3.4% of the total population of the country, and by Canadian standards this is densely populated at 16.5 persons per square km of land. (For comparison the populatin density of Great Britain is 234 people per square km). Nova Scotia's climate is variable. Summers, although short, are hot and very humid, the fall is usually warm and sunny, and the spring is frequently a wet, windy and foggy end to winter. However, during the winter the weather can be harsh, with freeze/thaw conditions which make travel treacherous. Indeed, School Boards expect to close schools for between 10 and 15 days each winter due to weather conditions.

Canada's Federal Government is founded on the British Parliamentary system. However, it is the Provincial Governments who concern themselves with matters of local interest, which in Canada includes both health and education! The Federal Government does not have a department for education.

Nova Scotia has a 52 member provincial legislature, who pass all legislation relating to education in the province. Education in Nova Scotia is legislated by The Nova Scotia Education Act 1982 and The Education for Handicapped Persons Act. According to the legislation the government is obliged to provide an 'appropriate education' and to accommodate all students who can 'benefit' from it. Neither minimum standards nor policies are defined by the legislation. However, in practice this is interpreted to mean that no child is rejected by the educational system because of physical or mental handicaps. Further, appropriate education has been interpreted to mean education until the age of 21 for children with certain special needs. The Education for Handicapped Persons Act also directs the Government to provide for the education and welfare of children with visual and hearing impairments from birth to the age of 21.

The Government meets its obligation to provide educational services for allthese children through the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA). The Department of Education is headed by a provincial Minister of Education and carries out the mandate of the Government to provide education for all other children. There are 22 district school boards in Nova Scotia, which are responsible for the control and management of schools within their jurisdiction. The Department of Education has recently established the Special Services Division whcih has a mandate to plan and co-ordinate special education programmes for the 22 boards, to maximise the learning opportunities for studendts with special needs across the Province.

The duties and powers of the School Boards approximate those of LEAs in England, and although some are similar in geographical size all serve a school population which is much smaller than a typical LEA. In Nova Scotia children with special educational needs are most commonly described as educationally challenged, although British terminology is also regularly used and understood. At present most children who are educationally challenged are integrated into their local public (statse) school, some have the support of a teacher's aide or welfare worker, and the lucky ones also have a specialist peripatetic teacher who visits them frequently in their regular school environment. The policy of integration was introduced in the Province about six years ago, and the few remaining institutions populated by 'young people who are difficult to place' are currently under threat of government closure.

The issues and arguments of integration are similar to, and no less controversial, in Canada than in Britain, but in Canada geography is one important factor in favour of integrating children in their local public school. For a child who does not attend their local school, the alternative is invariably long distance travel to a special school or centre and, to be practical, such an arrangement will usually necessitate termly boarding. For some families and individuals such long term boarding, away from home and local communities, creates its own problems and heartbreak.

The Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority is a co-operative project between the four provincial governments of Atlantic Canada; New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Prince Edward Island. APSEA was founded in 1975 to provide educational services for children aged 0-21 years who had hearing and visual handicaps, and live in one of the four provinces. Initially, two residential schools offered education programmes designed to meet the needs of children with visual and hearing impairments.

The schools, both in Nova Scotia which is the geographical centre of the Atlantic Provinces, were also set up as resource centres to offer a range of support services for the hearing and visually impaired. The services include consultation and assessment of the effects of impairment, special library services, in-service training for teachers and other professionals, provision and loan of materials and special equipment, and pre-school services.

In line with current provincial government policy the schools are undergoing considerable change. The are no longer places where young people stay from their early years to school leaving age. Both centres now admit pupils for short periods of time (2 years or less) to address specific educational objectives. Although both schools continue to serve a few pupils who have complex needs, most are awaiting a suitable alternative school or adult placement. Now known as the APSEA Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired (RCVI) and APSEA Resource Centre for the Hearing Impaired (RCHI), the centres are rapidly developing their on and off campus services, to optimise the support of young people who have been integrated into their local public schools. The schools and residences remain a part of the on campus programme, but they now act in support of the off campus programme.

Children may be referred to the RCVI in Halifax or to the RCHI in Amehurst by parents, teachers, social workers, or health workers. Once referred, they are then assessed for eligibility for services. Children are assessed at the appropriate centre, on the basis of the severity and effect of their impairment, and they are deemed eligible for APSEA services if it is found that their impairment interferes with the development of language or causes educational delay.

Off campus services of the RCVI include a provincial consultant teacher who assists school officials in providing appropriate education programmes for school age visually impaired pupils. In addition, itinerant teachers work with children from 0-21 years in their home or public shcool setting, where they teach the special skills necessary to accommodate a visual impairment. Itinerant teachers also work with parents, teachers and other care givers in developing and

adapting programmes to ensure the active participation of visually impaired children in school, home and community life. In isolated areas, or areas inadequately served by an itinerant teacher, specialist tutors trained by the RCVI provide remediation in specific subject areas. Instructors also design orientation and monbility programmes which may be taught through the itinerant or tutor programme.

On campus at the RCVI, there is a pre-school day programme for under fives. Also on campus, Sir Frederick Fraser School (SFFS) provides a residential or day school for young people between the ages of 5 and 21. Most pupils benefit from highly structured 24 hour programming, and are therefore resident, even if home is in the local area. Children who attend the school are assessed to determine their specific needs and an individualised education programme (IEP) is designed to address those needs. The anticipated period of attendance at the centre is also considered at this time. Under current policy this very rarely exceeds two academic years. Programmes will vary considerably in length from two weeks for mobility training or career education, to two years for low vision stimulation or behaviour management.

Special programmes at the school include braille, orientation and mobility, low vision stimulation, adaptive physical education, typing and computer skills, music, art, vocational and career education, independent living, recreation and leisure. At SFFS students who have a range of academic ability will follow numeracy and literacy programmes appropriate to their level of development. Many continue public shcool course work and programmes, while mature pupils may choose to study correspondence or community college courses. On completino of their programme at SFFS most pupils return to the same class group at their former local school.

The school also provides a special programme for children who have PMLD, and these children usually work on one or two year programmes focusing on individual social, physical and sensory development. Currently, about 25 of the 70 pupils attending the centre would be described as having PMLD. These pupils are grouped together according to their chronologivcal age, but have regular contact with other pupils both in school and in residence. An increasing number of referrals for residentail school placements are being made for children with profound, multiple and complex learning difficulties, and some of these pupils may have visual imppairments whose severeity is difficult to diagnose. Increasingly the centre is being requested to assess and provide services for pupils who have special needs but no idetifiable visual impairment. This trend is associated with the closure of special schools, residential centres, and other services for handicapped persons throughout the region.

Currently, with a view to reducing public sector spending, the four Provincial Governments are reviewing all government services (teachers in Nova Scotia have recently had a 3% pay cut in line with other provincial government workers). Funding for APSEA is under review, and both RCVI and RCHI are under threat of closure or possibly a merger. There is increasing pressure upon staff to ensure that progress is made on IEPs within the funding period. There is also a growing concern that funding periods for pupils are continually shortening, and unrealistic goals are being set for some by School Board administrators, who convince themselves that the same results can be achieved with reduced investment.

APSEA is unique in Canada in that it pools the resources of four Provincial Governments to provide an education service. The present service was conceived to support the policy of integration. Implicit in the structure is the fact that it cannot meet the educational needs of all the visually and hearing impaired children in all four Provinces, but it does provide a safety net for some children who require more specialist help than their local schools can provide.

This article is based on my experiences as a substitute and volunteer at Sir Frederick Fraser School, Halifax, Nova Scotia, and work as a substitute at other centres in the area.

Wendy Toy
Dartmouth
Nova Scotia

A SENSORY ROOM

Setting up - at reasonable cost

In New Zealand special schools during the last few years "Dark Rooms" became very popular - teachers were reading the literature, and deciding that Dark Rooms were the way to go!

As a teacher and teacher assistant of children with PMLD for a number of years, Shirley and I had always used a very tactile/sensory approach in our teaching programmes. After further reading, listening to advisors, and a visit from an old friend, Barry Carpenter, we began to see ways in which we could improve our programmes with a more specialised approach to sensory learning.
We decided on a room with a multi-sensory theme and tried to set it up with as little cost as possible.

The Room/Physical Environment

We had an internal store room 2.5m x 2.5m which the rest of the staff were happy for us to use. We painted the walls and ceiling black - matt finish. We installed:

- 2 three point plugs
- 1 dimmer switch on the central light - large round opaque shade
- 2 outlet switch boxes, each with four points
- 1 lamp and red bulb
- 3 fans - turning through 180^{o} (given by staff)
- 1 tape recorder
- A number of gentle meditative tapes.

The Tactile/"Feely" Walls

Using large pieces of cardboard, we covered them with lots of different textures, e.g. sand, macaroni, plastic grass, cotton wool, bottle tops, blocks. We just let our imaginations rip!! All sorts of unusual and different textures we found at school and home, then attached the cardboard panels to the wall with velcro. Change round at regular intervals.

The Visual/Galactic! Ceiling
We gathered a large range of bright, sparkly and shiny Christmas decorations, plus sheets of silver and iridescent paper wrapped round tubes and cut into narrow strips. These we draped across the room and hung from the ceiling - all in line with the fans of course! We made puff ball stars and hung them from the ceiling. with the light dimmed and the red glow from the lamp, the fans going on full, the effect is magical. If you can find a fibre optic lamp it adds another magical dimension.

The Olfactory/Smelly Air
Oil on the lamp shades and candle oil lamps give exciting smells to the room. Change frequently.

The Gustatory/Tasty Bank
On a shelf we keep a bank of containers filled with all sorts of substances for tasting, from very sweet to very sour. Great responses can be elicited here we find.

The Auditory/Listening
A good tape recorder playing a range of Geoff Clarkson Evergreen tapes make for a soothing serene listening environment.

We also use toys with flashing lights and noises, rolling toys, especially for tracking.

The initial cost to set up was approximately $200 (£75.00). We had great fun finding all the bits and bobs, buttons and bows, roughs and smoothes. What most people think of as 'junk' we found very valuable!

We are constantly looking at ways to change/upgrade/reorganise the room to retain the interest and value. It has become an invaluable teaching aid.

Denise Iversen
Shirley Culpan

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Provision for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties within the English Schools Foundation in Hong Kong

The ESF

The English Schools Foundation (ESF) is the largest education foundation in Asia and it administers 15 international schools; 5 secondary, 9 primary and 1 all age special school. There are 10,000 students drawn from over fifty nationalities. The foundation aims to provide for the individual needs of all students who can be educated through the English language, including those with special educational needs. We teach an entitlement curriculum based on the National Curriculum which is adapted to take account of the international context and particularly our location in South East Asia. The Jockey Club Sarah Roe School is an integral part of the English Schools Foundation's special education provision, alongside the two primary school and two secondary school special needs units, which cater for children with moderate learning difficulties. The foundation receives a government subvention and also charges fees, but there is no differential in the fees for mainstream or special schooling.

THE Jockey Club Sarah Roe School

The Jockey Club Sarah Roe School (JCSRS) was established in 1985 with the intention of providing special education in keeping with the spirit of the Warnock Report and the 1981 Education Act for children and young people with profound physical and/or mental disabilities (ESF Policy for Special Educational Needs 1992). It is the only English language school for students with severe learning difficulties in Hong Kong and the only English language school for students with PMLD in Asia.

The original school building was funded by a donation from the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club. As numbers increased over the years the school outgrew the building which was designed for only 20 students and so we are temporarily based in a large government leased secondary school,sharing the site with another ESF primary school annexe. The site was not designed to cater for students with special needs and consequently the building has undergone a large amount of renovation and adaptation to improve facilities e.g. ramps, a chairlift to the first floor, disabled toilets. With the support of the ESF, parents and others, specialist rooms have been developed including: speech therapy/occupational therapy/physiotherapy rooms, medical and changing rooms, a light and sound room, soft play area, art and craft room and a library/computer room.

The Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club has made another generous donation to build a new school which is scheduled for completion early 1996.

The students

The JCSRS caters for up to 40 students aged 5-19 years with severe and profound/multiple learning difficulties, some of whom may also have sensory impairments, physical disabilities and challenging behaviours. There are

some students on roll who have moderate learning difficulties. This may be for one of two reasons; either they cannont currently be catered for in the special needs units or their parents have chosen for them to remain at the school rather than transfer to one of the units.

In 1985 there were just six students on roll. Over the years the numbers have steadily grown reaching a peak in 1994 with 38 on roll. The proportion of students with PMLD has fluctuated; in 1990-1991 almost 30% of students had profound and multiple lesarning difficulties yet in the current academic year it is only 13%. The ESF as a whole experiences a yearly turnover of students of 30% and last year 13 of our students left. Planning for what can be a transitory expatriate population can be difficult and the effects are felt across the system.

Currently 25% students on roll are British passport holders with the remainder being American, Australian, Canadian, Filipino, Hong Kong Chinese, Indian, Singaporean and Sri Lankan, but over the years there have also been students from Burma, Egypt, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan and Thailand.

The Staff

We are fortunate that to a certain degree the staff reflects the international nature of the school's student population. Of the teachers, four are British, two are Hong Kong Chinese and one is Canadian, the support staff are mostly British with one Australian, on Dane, one Filipino and one Sri Lnakan, while our secretary, bus drivers, caretaker and cleaners are all Hong Kong Chinese.

The seven teaching staff are qualified teachers who have special education qualifications, four holding masters degrees. The multidisciplinary team includes a nurse, (25 hours), occupational therapist (12.5 hours), physiotherapist (12.5 hours) and speech therapist (12.5 hours). There is funding for one classroom assistant per class group during school hours. Currently 10 people come in for between 1-5 days and they have a wide range of qualificatins and previous experience e.g. teacher, nurse, residential worker, police officer. Classroom assistants and bus escorts are employed on a casual basis with an hourly rate of pay. The school also receives a great deal of support from volunteers.

However, having so many people in and out of school does not make effective communication and the development of consistent practice easy. Class teachers may have two or three classroom assistants and different volunteers working with them every week. Unfortunately there is not opportunity to discuss sutdents' individual educational programmes and behaviour management programmes outside school hours and it is school policy that students' needs and difficulties should not be discussed in front of them. However, there are ways we try to overcome this problem, IEPs and staff meeting minutes are available to all staff, daily noticeboards inform staff of lunchtime and self care duties, a communication board describes strategies to be used with individdual students to promote interaction. Therefore it is very much up to individuals to try and become informed in their own time.

Recently we have implemented the practice of giving new classroom assistants a day to "shadow" an experienced classroom assistant before taking up their duties. Although it has been almost impossible in the past to provide INSET for classroom assistants and volunteers we are currently offering a programme of sessions lead by the school nurse and therapists during school hours on a fortnightly basis on the following areas which were identified by the classroom assssistants themselves as priorities: first aid, health and safety, lifting, behaviour management, strategies to promote communication and independence.

Provision for students with PMLD

Class groups

Since 1992 all students with PMLD have been peer-age grouped within the six class groups (three primary and three secondary). Prior to this the school operated a Special Care class which catered for an all age group of PMLD students but it was felt that as the school numbers increased it was not only possible but desirable to replace this arrangement by peer age grouping. Some cross-grouping within the primary and secondary phases occurs and this provides opportunities for targeting specific learning activities and the use of specialist equipment e.g. sensory integration, body awareness, snoezelen, aromatherapy.

Curriculum

The school aims to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all its students and to this end teachers seek wherever possible to identify those aspects of the National Curriculum which are being met by the learning activities experienced by students with PMLD. However, there are many learning needs which belong to an earlier stage of development than those described in the National Curriculum orders and staff do not contrive to describe these activities purely in National Curriculum terms.

All students have their own IEP which describes in detail the current objectives being worked on in the following areas: English, Mathematics, Independence and Life Skills, Science, Information Technology, Physical Education, Expressive Arts and Personal, Social and Health Education.

Students with PMLD are given the same opportunities as far as possible to participate in all aspects of the curriculum and school life; swimming, assemblies, field-trips, Riding for the Disabled, residential camps.

Integration

Whereas a significant proportin of our MLD and SLD students have opportunities for locational and functional integration with other ESF schools, currently there are no school integration links for students with PMLD and challenging behaviours. However, we have community service links with other ESF schools and with the Li Po Chun United World College. Year 5, 6 and 7 students may come every week to work for a short time in the classroom, or they come on a week's placement.

In a place like Hong Kong it is difficult to promote integration with the local community. This is not only because of problems of access in terms of the physical nature of the city and territory but also because of attitudes. If

someone who uses a wheelchair wants to use the MTR (Mass Transit Railway - underground system) she must contact both stations in advance. Parents have described, and I myself have experienced people staring, pointing, moving away, and making comments when out and about with students who clearly have learning difficulties. Of course attitudes are slowly changing, and in the local community where the school is now sited local people show tolerance and patience and occasionally real interest in the students and the work of the school. Often people are surprised to see students with PMLD out in public since in the local provision such people are usually kept at home or are cared for in hospitals, rather than educated in schools. Despite the problems of getting our students out, we have become familiar faces in the nearby park, supermarket, flower market and post office.

Links have been established by the school nurse and therapists with outside agencies such as RehabAid, Sandy Bay Children's Hospital, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University which all provide specialist services, wheelchairs, aids. Teachers have visited local special schools to share experiences and gain understanding of what is available in the local provision and local teachers have visited our school.

Home-school links

Partnership with parents is an absolute necessity in a place like Hong Kong. The school caters for students from all over the territory with some students facing up to three hours on a bus to get to school and back every day. Families can often feel isolated as they do not necessarily have the same support network they may have developed in their home country. The home-school daily diaries are used by teachers and parents alike, often supplemented by telephone calls both during and outside school hours - it is not uncommon for teachers and therapists to make and receive calls at home. Regular meetings are held in school to discuss and review the IEP, and home visits may be made by teachers and therapists. Parents may also come into school as volunteers, wherever possible working in classes other than their child's class.

The PTA though small, is extremely active, particularly with fundraising. Transport, is provided in the form of four buses. Each bus is fitted with telephones and safety belts/harnesses and two of the buses are customised with wheelchair lifts. Door to door transport for all students is provided, wherever they live, so although bus fees are charged, these do not meet all the costs of providing such a service which includes employing bus escorts. Consequently the costs are shared between the PTA and the school. The PTA also provides funding for extra staff to go on residential camps and is considering funding additional staff to facilitate increased integraion links with other ESF schools.

Karen Giles
Deputy Head Teacher, JCSRS

THE CURRICULUM FOR PUPILS/STUDENTS WITH SEVERE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES IN JAPAN

The term 'severe learning difficulties' is not used in Japan. Instead, the term 'severe/profound and multiple handicaps/disabilities' is generally used.

Special education is provided in special schools and in special classes in ordinary elementary and lower secondary schools. There are three types of special schools:

1. Schools for the blind

2. Schools for the deaf

3. Schools for the handicapped - (three types):
   - i) schools for the mentally retarded
   - ii) schools for the physically handicapped
   - iii) schools for the health impaired, including the physically weak

There are two to four departments in each special school: Kindergarten, Elementary, Lower Secondary and/or Upper Secondary.

In our investigation carried out in 1990 the percentage of pupils/students with multiple handicaps in round figures were:

In schools for the blind:	about 30%
In schools for the deaf	15%
In schools for the mentally retarded	45-50%
In schools for the physically handicapped	70-80%
In schools for the health Impaired	40-45%

The Curriculum in Special Schools

"Special schools aim not only to provide education equipvalent to that of ordinary schools but also to provide the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits to enable handicapped children to overcome the various difficulties arising from their handicaps. The standards of the curriculum of special schools are, therefore, based on those of ordinary schols, but in addition a unique area named 'Educational Therapeutic Activities (Yougo Kunren)' is offered in the special schools. The contents of instruction in this area differ depending on types of special schools, for example, orientation and mobility instruction in schools for the blind, auditory and speech training in schools for the deaf, and standing and monbility instruction in schools for the physically handicapped. This area and other various exceptional provisions relating to education of the handicapped make it possible to

develop a curriculum which is flexible and appropriate to the handicapping condition of each child" (Special Education in Japan, 1991)

The "*Course of Study for Special Schools*" is issued by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture. This is the national standard of curriculum and provides the basic framework for curricula, setting the aim of each subject and the aims and contents of teaching in each grade.

The organization of curricula in special schools

Regular Subjects	Moral Education	Special Activities

Educational Therapeutic Activities
in accordance with the needs of each child
in accordance with the actual circumstances of each school

There are five areas of the educational therapeutic activities in the schools for the handicapped (M.D., P.H., H.I.):

- Movement or motor development
- Perceptual and cognitive activities
- Communication
- Sustaining and promoting of health

The contents of teaching for children with severe and multiple disabilities place great importance on Educational Therapeutic Activities.

Ryvichi Kawasumi
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The National Kurihama School for
Handicapped Children

S P E C I A L E D U C A T I O N I N

T H E N E T H E R L A N D S:

Provisions for severely mentally handicapped children..

The dutch educational system.

The Dutch educational system comprises the following:

1. Primary education, for children aged between 4 and 12.
2. Primary and secundary special education for children of all ages from 3 to 20, who clearly have special educational needs.
3. Secundary education, following on from primary education, for pupils aged roughly between 12 and 19.

Special needs education.

The concept of SPECIAL EDUCATION in the Netherlands applies to a relatively large and separate school system. This school system comprises fifteen different types of schools, each suited to the particular learning difficulties that children may encounter. The schools for the learning disabled and the schools for educable mentally retarded contain the highest proportion of children with special needs.

Special education can be divided into schools for:

a. deaf children;
b. partially hearing children;
c. children with severe speech disorders;
d. blind children;
e. partially sighted children;
f. psysically handicapped children;
g. children in hospitals;
h. chronically sick children;
i. mentally handicapped children;
j. severely mentally handicapped children;
k. severely maladjusted children;
l. children with learning and behavioural difficulties;
m. children in schools attached to paedological institutes (institutes associated with a Dutch university or wich provide educational guidance for special schools);
n. children with multiple handicaps;
o. pre-school-age children with developmental difficulties.

Children can be referred to special schools mentioned above in two ways:

- a child can suffer from a handicap of such a kind that it is obvious from an early age that he/she will have to be referred to a special school;
- a child who has attended an ordinary school for some time can be referred by that school to a special school.

The participation in special education in the Netherlands varies according to handicap and age group. Overall, almost 5 per cent of all children in the primary age group participate in separate special education, and in the past few years this participation only has been growing remarkable.

What happens if a child is referred for special education?
A child is always examined before being admitted to a school for special education. The examination is usually carried out by a special committee. In any case, the committee will consist of the head of the special school, a psychologist, a social worker and a doctor. These people will examine wether it is the child's best interest to be placed in the special school. When the parents are not in agreement with the results of the examination, they are able to talk with the people who formed the committee. A child is only placed in the school with the parents' consent.
Two years after the admittance, a re-examination has to take place in order to assess what results have been obtained in (the specific type of) education, in what way futher development of the pupil's capacities can be realised and wether the pupil should be transferred to regular education or to another type of special education.

Education for severely mentally retarded children.
At the moment there are in the Netherlands about 130 schools for severely mentally retarded children (primary and secundary education, for children from 4 to 20 years old).
These schools are particularly for children of whom the development is seriously disturbed. This can be related to the motor system, the development of the command of the language, the acquisition of social skills, the understanding of subject matter etc. Total development often goes very irregular and very slow. At the moment regular schools aren't able to help these children in an adequate way.
In the schools for severely mentally handicapped children the curriculum contains other subjects besides the curricula of other schools for special education. The following subjects appear in the curriculum of schools for severely mentally retarded children, if possible in an integrated form:
- sensory coördination;
- physical exercise;
- self-reliance,i.e.social and life skills, including road safety if possible;
- creative activities, which include in any event the use of language, drawing, music, handicrafts and play and movement;
- one or more factual subjects, wich should in any event include biology.

For each child, an individual educational programme has to be made, in which has to be laid down which educational goals are aimed for the specific pupil. Things which are going very well are emphazised, so that it's possible for the children to get self respect. Children have to become independant as much as possible. Hopefully they can take care for themselves after leaving school.

In the schools for secundary education the severely mentally handicapped children have to be prepared for participating to society in one way or another. It isn't possible for severely mentally retarded children to learn a self-employed profession. Most important is oriëntation on society life. They have to gain the necessary experience and to got some sense of responsibility. For most of the children it's normal that after this school they go to sheltered workshops or a day care centre for adults.
The subjects in the curriculum of the secundary school are probably the same as in primary schools for severely mentally retarded children, completed with at least two other subjects. This can be building constructions,textural arts, home economics etc. A small part of the children do, when they are eighteen years, a work-placement. Sometimes for a couple of hours a day, sometimes for two or three days a week. Most of the time the workplacement is at sheltered workshops.

The aim of all the schools for severely mentally handicapped children is to develop these children to an optimal independance in minimal dependance, so that it is possible for the children to perform significant in adullt society .

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Coping with Stress from Teaching Children with Special Learning Needs: The Nigerian Experience

Dr Sunday Udokang

ABSTRACT

In this paper, the concept of work stress and stress in the Nigerian school situation are discussed. The results of the interviews of 30 teachers of children with special educational needs on their coping strategies are highlighted. Governments are also reminded of the need to support, in practical terms, the education of these children as of right.

INTRODUCTION

As rightly observed by Fontana et al. (1993), stress is a natural and unavoidable feature of life experienced, at one time or another, by the vast majority of those engaged in professional work. Teaching, by itself, is a very challenging profession, but according to Wilkinson (1988) it is one of the professions where practitioners are subject to a high evidence of potentially stressful situations. If teaching the 'normal' children is stressful, it is common knowledge that teaching children with special learning needs should be more stressful. Even though many psychologists and educationalists have recommended mainstreaming or integration to help these children learn, this does not imply that special schools should be done away with. While some children with mild or moderate learning needs could be integrated, giving room for withdrawals for separate teaching of some subjects, those children with profound learning needs need separate schools to cope. It is true that most individuals enter teaching because of a desire to make a difference in children's lives (Le Compte and Dworkin, 1991), but if the difference is not glaringly recognised with time, as in some cases of those with profound learning needs, such teachers are apt to be full of stress. But how do they cope?

CONCEPT OF STRESS

Stress is a scientific concept which has suffered from a mixed blessing of being too well known but too little understood. When applied in psychology and medicine, stress is considered to mean 'forces of noxious stimuli within the environment' which act on human organism, resulting in a pattern of reactions within the individual.

Selye (1956) defines it as a non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it. This reveals that stress can be evoked by many different types of stressors, that it represents a protective defence mechanism which may be maladaptive. However, stress can sometimes act as a factor in effective motivation (Linn and Zippa, 1984) but can also have devastating consequences in individual cases.

Lazarus (1971) defines human stress as:

> ...a very broad class of problems differentiated from other problem areas because it deals with any demands which tax the organism.

In this case, the reaction depends on how the person interprets or appraises (consciously or unconsciously), the meaning and significance of a harmful, threatening or challenging event. In essence, stress is thought to occur from a misfit between the individual and his surrounding – an imbalance in the context of an organism – surrounding transactions.

Stress is taken to be a physical, mental or emotional reaction resulting from the subject's response to environmental extensions, conflicts, pressures and similar stimuli. It is the result of an imbalance between demands and the adaptive capacities of the mind and body (Fontana, 1989). These demands if carried on beyond the ability of these capacities to respond, lead to the physical and psychological exhaustion and possibly, ultimate collapse (Selye, 1976).

STRESS IN THE SCHOOL SITUATION

Some teachers in special education have to cope with children, some of whom have a learning disability involving a marked lack of ability to respond positively to education. Some of the children have different degrees of disability or handicap from mild to severe and profound.

Teachers are not only expected to provide a special or modified curriculum, but also means of access to the curriculum through specialised equipment, facilities and teaching techniques.

Teachers of children with special educational needs have to provide a social and emotional environment which enhances the learning of these children.

Even though most parents of children with special educational needs know that their children have disabilities which either prevent or hinder them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided in 'normal' schools, they still expect teachers to make their children literate. This is stressful for some teachers.

In some cases, teachers operate without the appropriate resources – consultant support by teachers with appropriate specialist qualifications, regular supply of learning materials modified for particular disabilities, non-teaching assistance, provision and servicing of technical equipment and the like. These, indeed, are stressful.

As a typical example, the Nigerian National Policy on Education (1981) (revised), advocates an egalitarian and functional type of education. Its policy, specifically, on special education, embraces:

i) giving concrete meaning to the idea of equalising educational opportunities for all children, their physical, mental, emotional disabilities notwithstanding

ii) providing adequate education for all handicapped children and adults in order that they may fully play their roles in the development of the nation

iii) providing opportunities for exceptionally gifted children to develop at their own pace in the interest of the nation's economic and technological development.

However, in practice, equalisation of educational opportunities is now unattainable in Nigeria (Abosi, 1988). In a situation where the government pays lip service to special education, most teachers of children with special educational needs are very stressed and discouraged.

Commenting on special education in Nigeria, Onwuegbu (1988) said:

> The schools are not many, the supportive personnel is almost non-existent. The equipment is meagre, and where they exist, they are not maintained. Special Education textbooks are lacking. The government practises stringency where it should not, hence it is almost impossible to import needed equipment and textbooks. Worse still, those who do not know what special education is all about, control its affairs.

The above is very stressful for special education teachers who are dotted around mainstream schools and half-a-dozen special schools in the country. From the foregone, one is apt to wonder how these teachers cope.

COPING STRATEGIES

When 30 teachers of children with special educational needs (13 from two special schools and 17 from 15 primary mainstream schools), in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria, were asked how they coped with their jobs, they gave the following answers in descending order:

i) Thinking objectively about the job and keeping bad feelings under control as teaching these children was my decision.

ii) Self-reassurance that I am not doing the wrong thing by teaching the 'unfortunate' kinds.

iii) Using a sense of humour as much as possible.

iv) Making sure that I am doing my best and that my colleagues know this too.

v) Thinking that God will reward me in future.

vi) Discussion of problems with my colleagues.

vii) Trying to like the children for what and how they are as it is not their fault.

viii) By not being afraid to ask the parents anything about the children.

ix) By varying the methods of teaching the children, I adopt a learner-centred educational approach.

x) By playing music and at times, dancing with them.

xi) Trying as much as possible not to lose my temper no matter the provocation.

xii) By trying to be how I am.

xiii) By thinking that not many teachers can do what I am doing now.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The teachers' responses could be grouped into: having self-confidence to deal with the stressful situation; using sense of humour and music; having commendation and support from both colleagues and parents; expectation of reward from God and varying teaching techniques to suit each child with special educational needs. All these agree with Dunham (1976), who asserted that some teachers of the children with special needs develop new coping techniques in response to stress situations. In a situation where most of the special schools are owned by philanthropic organisations and individuals, teachers must have self-confidence to succeed. They must like their job and have sympathy for the children they help to learn. These support Fontana et al.'s (1993) view on combatting stress of some teachers.

Expecting a reward from God, despite the reluctance of various Nigerian government agencies to support, in practical terms, the education of these sets of children, acts as a hidden incentive for these teachers, especially when parents of these children appreciate what is being done for their children.

The teachers of these children know that it was they who had made up their minds to teach them. With this in mind, they are able to endure the embedded hardship with tact. They make use of music to make the children calm down. They, themselves, use music as a kind of relaxation.

As far as teaching the children with special educational needs is concerned, all education policy-makers in all countries of the world, should realise that it is not all that easy to teach these children. Teachers need much support both in principle and in practice, to succeed. The sooner the developing countries, especially Nigeria, practicalise their educational policies, the better for their citizens. There is no need to neglect the learning disabled, treating them as commodities to be toyed with.

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The International Aspects of The Sherborne Foundation.

To date the Sherborne Foundation U.K. has overseas members from Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Poland, Canada, Australia, Germany, Belgium and Japan.

The Foundation has been set up in memory of Veronica Sherborne; it's main objective being to perpetuate the movement within the spirit and philosophy she herself put forward during her life time. However, although the work is best known and generally referred to as 'Sherborne Movement' a decision has been taken through the Foundation, that academically, it should be referred to as 'Developmental Movement - based on the work of Veronica Sherborne' As Sherborne herself would point out:-

' I do Sherborne Movement - you take my ideas
and develop them, as I took Laban's theories
and developed them in my particular way.'

For this reason it was decided to use part of the title from her book 'Developmental Movement for Children' - (Cambridge University Press 1990) - thus acknowledging it's roots in Sherborne's work, but at the same time allowing it to thrive and develop in the future.

Veronica Sherborne was invited on many occasions to present her work, either through lectures or workshops and courses, overseas. Early excursions took her to Scandinavia, Canada, Australia and Poland, and it is significant that there is still a thriving interest in her work in all of these countries, both in the educational and therapeutic settings. A piece of recent research carried out by a Canadian psychologist indicated that non-object play (in this case Developmental Movement), compared with other play situations, proved to be the most effective in terms of stimulating intentional communication in non-verbalising children. In another context in Canada movement is used very successfully with young adults with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

In 1994 following a previous visit in 1986, Barry Carpenter found that the movement was still being used with very young children in special schools in Sydney Australia. Also in 1994 he was able to introduce Sherborne's work into special schools in New Zealand, through lectures and the use of videos.

As yet the Foundation does not have any positive contacts in New Zealand; we would welcome any movement news from that part of the world.

In Norway interest in Sherborne work has extended very effectively into the field of physiotherapy, where it forms part of the courses offered to students; this is

also the case in Sweden; the Foundation has contacts in both countries in education and therapy.

In Poland the movement is now used by psychologists and teachers in their work with children and young people with special needs, and in the homes for orphaned and socially deprived children.

In more recent times it has been introduced in many other countries. Since 1989 George (Hill) has worked regularly with teachers and therapists in Finland and Estonia and in 1993 and 1994 he and I were invited to present the movement in Japan.

In 1993 and 1994 also Barry Carpenter led movement courses for teachers who work with children with physical disabilities and severe and multiple learning difficulties, in Madeira.

The movement in Belgium is there through a link initially with Rika Taeymens, a teacher in the circus school in Leuven. She visited England and worked with Veronica Sherborne for a period of three months, took her ideas back to the Flemish part of Belgium and from those beginnings it has thrived. It is now used extensively, perhaps more than anywhere else, in special schools, in all aspects of therapy and by psychologists.

At the moment the organisation of the Sherborne Foundation is based on the formalised Sherborne Foundation - U.K., but it is envisaged that eventually those countries who wish to do so will set up their own Foundation's which, with the U.K. Foundation will all affiliate to form, 'The International Sherborne Foundation'.

We regularly run Developmental Movement courses at the Sherborne Centre in Bristol and are putting on an International Course for advanced practitioners at Exhall Grange School, Coventry in April 1995. We also hope to run an 'International Encounter' on perhaps a two yearly basis, in various host countries, in the future.

We are always pleased to welcome Foundation members from the U.K. and abroad, to whom we offer reduced fees for courses, access to the resource material kept at the Sherborne Centre, contact with other movement practitioners in the U.K. and overseas, and the regular sharing of information through our newsletter 'In Touch' and our more theoretical publication 'Contact'.

I would like to thank PMLD Link for inviting me to share this information with you. If you would like to know more about our courses or the Sherborne Foundation please contact me at;-

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Cyndi Hill
Nov. 1994,

"THAT'S A NICE BUBBLE TUBE - WE'LL HAVE ONE OF THEM!"

If we, as educators, were given a large sum of money to resource an area of the curriculum, I wonder what factors and, indeed, principles might inform our decision-making concerning the equipment we would buy. I doubt that any of us would leaf throught the catalogues merely picking out the equipment which appeared most colourful or attractive. Although we might pay some attention to the aesthetics of a resource, I hope we would be considerably more interested in its function, and in matching it to the identified needs of our pupils. In other words, the equipment we would select would be determined by the curriculum we intend our children to follow, and its ability to support them in their learning. Were we to spend large sums of money merely on the basis of how attractive equipment looked, others might be tempted to question our professional judgement, or indeed our sanity! Yet I have a strong suspicion that this is precisely how the equipment for many Multisensory rooms is selected. Packages of resources are installed at enormous expense with little reference to the particular needs of the school or individual pupils. This is perhaps not entirely surprising in view of the very limited amount of information available relating specific equipment or combinations of equipment to specific needs of children or staff in sensory environments.

It was with these thoughts in mind that I undertook a small scale research project over the last year, attempting to identify the functions which current users of Multisensory rooms found specific pieces of equipment best fulfilled in their experience. I hope the results may prove to be of benefit to anyone currently designing Multisensory rooms in their schools. It would bebeneficial to current Multisensory room users if more data could be collected which would support or negate these findings.

A questionnaire was sent to five SLD schools in southern Hampshire who currently have Multisensory rooms, asking them to evaluate the usefulness of their equipment in relation to specific and general functions. Collation of their responses led to the following conclusions:

This small sample of users recommend, for the basic room construction itself:-

- White walls
- Soft play mats on the floor (reversible white/coloured to maximise usefulness)
- A water bed

When equipment was ranked in order of general usefulness the top five were:

1. Bubble tubes
2. Hi-Fi-system
3. Solar 250 projector
4. Fibre-optics
5. Switch system
   Mirror ball and spot

Aroma diffusers and tactile panels came botton of the ranking.

When asked to link specific equipment to a particular function, the following equipment was outlined as useful by more than 50% of the users:

- For assessing vision - Light tubes
- For promoting relaxation - Bubble tubes, Hi-Fi
- For encouraging communication - Crystal pulse
- For individual skill development - - Switching system
- For sensory stimulation - Mirror ball and spot lights

I was able to give the teaching and therapy staff at my current school a questionnaire prior to the installation of a Multisensory room. This enabled them to outline the functions which they intended to use the Multisensory room for with their pupils, and also to state the equipment which they would like to see in the room. Interestingly, the equipment which they would have selected did not match closely that identified by current users as best fulfilling the functions which they had outlined. In other words, it would bave been very easy to spend a great deal of money equipping a room which then did not meet the school's or the pupils' needs as well as it could have done. Much more carefully researched information needs to be made available to potential and current users of Multisensory rooms in order that these rooms can be resourced appropriately to best meet the needs of the pupils.

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NEWS! NEWS! NEWS!

LAUNCH OF THE CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION, WESTMINSTER COLLEGE, OXFORD.

The official launch of the Centre for the Study of Special Education took place on Tuesday, 4th April 1995 at Westminster College with an inaugural lecture given by Professor Peter Mittler. It was attended by guests form the UK and aborad who are leaders in the field of special education.

The Centre was established in September 1994 to improve the quality of teaching and research across a wide range of special needs in education. It offers an innovative range of school-based, award bearing courses for teachers and special support asssistants across Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Wiltshire and Oxfordshire. It is unique in the region, offering vital inservice training, as well as offering opportunities for associated professionals.

The Centre is concerned with a wide range of special educational needs from those of the gifted child to pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

The Centre supports one full-time Research Fellow as well as the Fulton Fellowship which is awarded annually to support research in the field of special educational needs.

PLANET have now moved from Harperbury. The Resource Centre has been taken over by *SCOPE* and is based at Redditch. Good news for those who work in the Midlands, but not so good for people in the South!

The project co-ordinator, Judy Denziloe is now based with Save the Children. PLANET will continue to provide all the same services as before and Judy can be contacted at:

PLANET, Save the Children
Cambridge House
Cambridge Grove
London W6 0LE

Tel: 0181 741 4054
Fax: 0181-741-4505

Research Group in Leeds

Malcolm Henshall has told us about a new research group in Leeds. He writes:

Through the TVEI network in Leeds a group of PMLD teachers is being set up to research a number of issues. We have become increasingly aware that the needs of our pupils and students are being marginalised [e.g. National Curriculum, Accreditation]. We feel the need to raise awareness of their existence and their needs within our authority, within mainstream schools, within bodies that deal with schools[e.g. TEC, OFSTED etc.] and in relation to the National Curriculum. We also recognise that current practice in the way of respect and dignity is not always what it should be.

Consequently we hope to.....

1. Establish a representative group of teachers of those with pmld in Leeds.
2. Write and establish a common ethos and 'Bill of Rights' for our pupils and students.
3. Research in to methods of accreditation for those with pmld.
4. Enquire into the feasibility of setting up a central resource bank for staff development.
5. As a result of the above we would hope to use the knowledge and information gained to raise awareness of our pupils and students within relevant bodies.

We have had an initial meeting but it would be fair to point out that this letter is my interpretation of what we agreed at that meeting. We are aware, of course, that this sort of endeavour must have been carried out in many different places already. We are also sure that any group that has any information on such issues would be willing to share their work. We, in turn, will share anything we come up with. So, Carol, can you put us in touch with any such group, any information we would find useful or any relevant books?

If anyone is interested in getting in touch and sharing information with the Leeds group Malcolm can be contacted at Penny Field School, Tongue Lane, Leeds, LS6 4QD Telephone: 01532-783577.

I hope that the results of the work of the research group will be publicised and shared with us all through future issues of PMLD-Link.

Crossing the Bridge - access to the National Curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties.

In 1992 a group of teachers, working in special schools in Kent with pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, formed what was intended to be a support group. It immediately became obvious that our major concern was how to access the National Curriculum in a meaningful way for our pupils. We were all concerned that although we agreed the National Curriculum had breadth and balance, it did not always have relevance for our pupils. Our support group quickly turned into a working party, divided into three sub groups, to write a foundation level for each of the three core curriculum subjects of the National Curriculum.

We decided to take the programmes of study and attainment targets for English, Mathematics and Science at level 1, and unravel each strand back to its very basic level or prerequisite skill. After much discussion, we decided to call our steps to the National Curriculum "bridges", and wrote three bridges for each attainment target which lead directly into level 1. We have kept the format of the National Curriculum documents, writing programmes of study, attainment targets and giving examples for each strand leading to level 1. We have added a "resources" or "suggestions" column for each bridge in which we have included tried and tested equipment, informative books and any other information which we felt would be helpful to teachers trying to implement the programmes of study. The documents are intended to be inserted in the front of the National Curriculum subject folders. Our aim was to provide our pupils with a curriculum which included them in the mainstream of educational practise, which was relevant to their needs, and which would show the very real progress they made so that they would not be "working within" all their school lives.

We were fortunate to be encouraged and supported by Sue Airey, who negotiated a grant from T.V.E.I which has enabled us to buy supply cover (for about 8 working days so far), and which pays for photocopying, postage, travel expenses and which will also pay for future dissemination of the completed document.

We have very nearly completed the final revision of the document, having piloted the three foundation subjects for one term. Of course, just when we thought we had finished, the National Curriculum itself was revised!

The group would be interested to hear from any teachers similarly engaged, and, once our document is finished, will circulate a contact address from which copies can be obtained.

Debbie Edge
on behalf of the Kent PMLD working party

Summary of the NORTH WEST REGIONAL CONFERENCE -

MAXIMISING LEARNING FOR STUDENTS WITH PROFOUND AND MULTIPLE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES.

Held on Monday 6th March 1995 at Haydock Park Conference Centre.

Background to Conference

Key principles in any school development are teamwork, the acknowledgement of successful practice and supporting one another. These were reflected in the conference objectives :

1. To bring practitioners together who are often working in isolated situations.
2. To consider various curriculum opportunities.
3. To reflect on practice and share success.
4. To use the expertise of colleagues to address common issues.
5. To use the conference as a means for sustaining self support network.

One of the key principles the conference underlined was that of acknowledging the expertise (experience, knowledge and understanding) of the people working day to day with such pupils.

From time to time there is a need to look beyond school for new ideas and a fresh perspective. But in so doing there is the need to reflect on what good practices already exist, with the emphasis being upon the school staff.

This conference set about giving colleagues time and opportunity to share and reflect on current developments and school practice.

We are all about improving the quality of education provided to these students. It is the process along this path and the variety of teaching techniques that was under discussion.

NB Reference NFER Summary - " small steps of progress in the National Curriculum".

The keynote speaker was Chris Stevens who is a professional officer for Special Educational needs at SCAA. Chris talked to colleagues, outlining the issues addressed and the measures taken in the Dearing Review of the National Curriculum. He also talked about SCAA's current work which has implications for PMLD Students. (see reference above.)

The remainder of the morning was given over to workshops, with a deliberately heavy emphasis towards practice in the classrooms.

Workshops :

1. Record of Achievement.

The aim of this workshop was to investigate ways of recording achievement of students who have profound and multiple learning difficulties which are meaningful to students / parent, professionals and reflects the diversity of these achievements. There were examples of ROA ' s intended to illustrate the above aim and a chance to discuss further developments.

2. Experience of OFSTED.

The workshop looked at one schools experience of OFSTED inspection from the initial letter to the preparation of an action plan. It proved a valuable insight into an OFSTED inspection and how such a school responded .

3. Process for Identifying Communication

A workshop on setting up a communication system within a school, taking the needs of each individual into account and involving parents.
The workshop was based on the ' Take Time To Listen ' scheme developed at Gorse Bank School, Oldham.

4. Transition Issues

* Discussion of the transition process in Oldham, as it was, and then the Senior Department curriculum as it is now.
* Conference - ' Moving On' in Oldham.
* Outcomes to date; changes since the conference.
* Sharing of information about other schools, where the pupils go, choices, options and problems to discuss.
* Brainstorm and use of flipchart to contribute to conference report.

5. Mobility Opportunities via Education.

The M.O.V.E. Program is based on teaming the expertise of therapy and education to address the functional needs of students when they become adults.

6. Managing Change.

This workshop focussed on the significance of taking a whole school development planning approach when determining and implementing strategies for maximising student learning opportunities. There was a personal overview of theSenior Management Team, and its role in ensuring the delivery of effective change.

Throughout the day, but especially during the dinner time period a "Market Place " existed for colleagues to display work on a variety of issues, to share and find out more about work going on in the region concerning these students needs and abilities.

The afternoon session of the conference was devoted to colleagues, in small discussion groups, sharing aspects of their work, which they felt to be particularly successful, AND issues which were more of a problem. Overall, there were many common issues as one arguably might expect. Each discussion group had a 'chair ' person and a scribe.

This " Prides and Problems " format gave rise to some excellent discussions, importantly focussing on achievements as much as day to day problems which staff encounter.

Prides included

i) Successful redeployment staff in more imaginative ways to target specific student needs at key times in the day.

ii) Having a class of PMLD students as a discreet class and moving more able students functionally integrating into this group for specific lessons.

iii) Decreased use of labelling of such students and integrating with peers for specific lessons based on their individual action plans.

iv) Being prepared to make specific time for PMLD pupils to be a group and to address their very individual needs eg : physio programmes, sensory issues, motor skills.

v) Various examples of mainstream and college links.

Problematic issues included

i) On-going recording of very slow but necessary experiences and skills development.

ii) Opportunities for less adult intervention whilst maintaining a high degree of student interaction with their environment.

iii) Balancing positive and negative aspects of integration ,especially when human resources are stretched to meet known daily needs.

iv) Selling the National Curriculum to parents and being able to report accurately and positively when progress is slow,

v) Issues of expectations and how staff are used and supported with

school. Aspirations of senior management and that of classroom staff working with such students.

Evaluation - Sustaining the Network(s)

The conclusion to the conference was a very short reflection on what had been achieved, and in place of a formal evaluation sheet, an open discussion regarding colleagues views as to what future steps should be taken based on the conference objectives.

* Clearly the conference fulfilled its original objectives of allowing colleagues to share issues and progress, to swop ideas and exchange contact numbers
* There were requests for the conference to be repeated next year or quarterly and that it should be made clearer it is open to anyone working with such pupils (eg : Therapists, etc.)
* The information gained from the workshops, discussion groups and individuals form part of a conference report which will be sent to colleagues. Further copies are available, and as a point of contact Gorse Bank School has offered to be this - the address, phone number and fax appears below.

Dave Calvert
Deputy Head / TVEI Co-ordinator
Gorse Bank School
Foxdenton Lane
Chadderton
Oldham
Lancs
OL9 9QR
TEL / Fax : (0161) - 652 1316

There has since been an evaluation by the organisers and a follow -up conference has been pencilled in for February 1996.

The organisers felt that by asking colleagues who attended to bring a prepared Pride / Problem agenda and the use of the ' Market Place ' idea should be developed on the next occasion. This would enable the sharing of ideas, and co-operation between colleagues to continue to be a key and active feature of the conference.
Wider issues regarding the education of students in SLD schools, such as, links with mainstream, the degree of involvement of Governors, senior managers support for developing quality classroom practice and timetable verses actual classroom / lesson content may also be issues that the conference can tackle.

It is encouraging to be a part of this sharing and supportive network and if any colleagues wish to help to develop this or wish to know more about the discussions at the conference - the address is contained in this short article.

Dave Calvert.

reviews *reviews* reviews *reviews*

Access to Communication
Nind, M. and Hewett, D.
Fulton, 1994, 234 pp
Paperback £16.99.
ISBN 1-85346-283-7

This has to be my nomination for the 'if you only read one book about people with learning diffculties this year, read this one' category. *Access to Communication* was, deservedly, highly commended at this year's NASEN–TES special needs book awards and, for those of us who have been following and quoting Nind and Hewett's work through journal articles and professional development sessions over the years, this summary of their position to date seems long overdue. At last there is a book to refer to and recommend.

Most of Nind and Hewett's work, at Harperbury Hospital School, has been with young people with 'the most severe learning difficulties and associated multiple disabilities and challenging behaviours'. At the core of their approach has been the desire to find routes to communication and interaction with 'people who are preverbal' – routes founded in students'/clients' own behaviours. Intensive Interaction is playful, non-directive, non-confrontational and gentle. It is 'process and student-centred'. It seeks to respect and value the student/client as a whole person through all her or his behaviours and characteristics.

Interestingly, this book mentions the National Curriculum only once and that is simply in order to dismiss all the tedious external pressures which may distract staff from doing things at 'the preferred tempo of life of your student/client'. Behavioural approaches, 'with rigid structures, tight objectives, and tick–lists', are also given a rather brusque dismissal on the grounds that they are 'not compatible' with Intensive Interaction. *Access to Communication* is uncompromisingly and unapologetically partisan. This is both a strength – it is refreshing to read material which is so totally committed to the student/client perspective – and also a missed opportunity. The book appears at a time when many schools, having devoted a few years to the process of coming to terms with the National Curriculum, are turning once again to fundamental cross–curricular issues such as communication and personal and social growth and development. Intensive Interaction can and should be seen as part of the whole curriculum for people with learning disabilities and it might have been useful to explore this perspective – especially when publications like *Learning for Life*, coming from a similar philosophical base, are stressing the pervasiveness of an educational approach.

But this is a minor point. The book itself, starting from a theoretical and historical perspective, offers a hugely rich and detailed analysis of practice. The pages are full of illustrative case studies and descriptions of interactive sequences exemplifying particular student/client difficulties – profound and multiple learning difficulties, social isolation, sensory impairment – and the process of developing individual forms of access to communication. At every stage, the significant moments, the nuances of style, are picked out of the narrative. The major issues are then brought together in regular sets of summary points. The core of the book, eighty-three pages on 'How to do Intensive Interaction', will be a delight to anyone who has been craving some truly practical 'tips for teachers' amongst all the policy-making, curriculum planning and issues-focused INSET. Here are lots of ideas you can pick up and take in to work tomorrow.

The book does also present an extensive chapter on issues, but they are all relevant and related to practice. The questions Nind and Hewett ask – what is age appropriate? what constitutes inappropriate physical contact? how do we achieve tasklessness? – illuminate their view of practice and even take the reader into the realms of Zen and the art of gentle teaching.

This is an easy book to read, despite its learned level of referencing, partly because the case study narratives bring it to life. The fact that Nind and Hewett have opted for a many layered system of sub headings takes a little getting used to, but, broadly speaking, the content is accessible and well–presented. There is a glossary, a bibliography and author and subject indeces. The message here is simple. You need either to locate a copy of this book, or go out and buy it for yourself. Whether or not you are wholly persuaded by its argument, this book will surely reward you with new insights into the people with whom you work and your interactions with them.

Learning for Life
FEU – mencap
FEU, 1994, 148 pp
Paperback £12.50. FEU 037

This important publication, presented in A4, spiral bound format, is described as a 'pack to support learning opportunities for adults who have profound intellectual and multiple physical disabilities'. It is aimed at 'anyone who lives or works with adults with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities', including parents, carers, volunteers, nurses, advocates, friends and social workers. Teachers are not mentioned – presumbly because this would be preaching to the converted. One of the premises of the pack is that learning is a 'core activity' for adults with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities. It should pervade life and not be seen as proceeding only in consciously 'educational' settings.

In this spirit, the pack argues that educational aims are the same for everyone. The particular challenge for people living and working among adults with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities is to provide learning opportunities at 'an appropriate developmental level' while conferring choice and 'adult dignity'. Indeed, much of the content of the pack seeks to tackle difficult areas concerning ethos, values and attitudes.

Chaper 1 sets the philosophical tone. It discusses adult status, physical contact, an analysis of the learning process, self advocacy and the importance of respecting wishes and choices. It sets these in context with a series of pen portraits and describes a number of ways in which the pack could be used.

The next two chapters offer the majority of the content. Titled 'Everyday Learning' and 'Framework for Learning', both sections follow a similar format. There is much cross-referencing between these two chapters and the reader is sometimes tempted to wonder about the clarity of the purpose of keeping them separate. They both cover awareness, communication (including pre-intentional communication), social relationships and the implications of taking the pack's ideas into the 'wider world'. Both chapters explore strategies for facilitating the learning process through assessment, priority setting, planning, doing, recording and monitoring and evaluation. Both chapters are generously illustrated with practical examples, case studies, ideas for things to do and planning and recording systems to use.

Two final chapters deal with 'Working Together' – the multidisciplinary team approach – and 'Making it Happen' – the process of funding, maintaining and resourcing initiatives. In addition to the obligatory terminology debate, the very useful 'Appendices' detail publications, resource lists, contact addresses, record keeping and assessment sheets.

This is not a pack about 'how to feed' or 'how to lift'.The essence of this pack is bold and ground–breaking. It attempts to bring an essentially holistic insight to an area which has been dominated by medicine, psychology and therapy. It offers carers and workers new ways of seeing and interacting with the humanity of people with profound intellectual and multiple physical disabilities. This approach is timely, relevant and important. In many ways, however, the pack tries to do too many things at once. It seeks to be a team building programme, a service development blueprint, a discoursive book, a resource pack and a distance learning module for individuals. It does contain distance learning style activities tucked rather unsatisfactorily and ambiguously away into the margins. However, there is no index, which might make sense of the resource pack notion. I found the introductory section to be fascinating in terms of debate but not very clear in terms of how to use the material.

Despite these misgivings, this pack sets up a powerful and robust agenda. It is very reasonably priced and you should make sure you see it wherever you work. I hope it proves to be an opening gambit in a series of more precisely targetted publications and resources.

The development of early Communication and Feeding for people who have profound and multiple disabilities

Goldbart, J., Warner, J. and Mount, H.

mencap, 1994, 281 pp
Paperback £42.50.
ISBN 0-85537 122

This, another publication with which Mencap is associated,

stands in complete contrast to *Learning for Life*. *Communication and Feeding* is designed very specifically as a workshop training package and its authors make clear specific requirements with regard to how such workshops are to be set up and run. Indeed, the first section of the pack is devoted to the administration of the three day workshop programme. It covers territory from selection of course tutors ('it is **essential** that one of the tutors is a Speech and Language Therapist') through 'providing for daughters and sons of participants during the workshop' to organising insurance cover. This section makes clear that workshop participants may be parents, carers, staff and interested parties from a wide variety of settings.

The other two sections of the pack quite simply contain all the resources and materials that are necessary to run the three day workshop. The tutor's manual contains photocopiable originals for handouts, worksheets and OHP's as well as tutor's instructions. Day 1 is devoted to defining communication and analysing its development (focusing on the idea that 'any behaviour is communicative' and the transition from preintentional to intentional communication). Day 2 looks, in detail, at the *Affective Communication Assessment* (requiring tutors to bring to the session extracts from pre-recorded video) and Day 3 moves on to look at feeding, with an emphasis on the physical act.

The third section, the workshop participant's manual, repeats all the handouts and worksheets already contained in the tutor's manual. The repetition is, perhaps, unnecessary but then this is an extravagantly well-produced pack. There is, for instance, printing on only one side of any sheet that needs to be photocopied. The layout is clear and spacious and the cross-referencing and contents information impeccable.

The contrast with *Learning for Life? Communication and Feeding* is a far better produced, presented, designed and edited item. It is thorough and meticulous. But, where *Learning for Life* is bold and adventurous, treading fearlessly into difficult, uncertain terrain, *Communication and Feeding* remains on fairly safe ground. It sets out to share established information and expertise rather than to challenge attitude or ideology. And this is a perfectly reasonable aim – especially when it is pursued at such a high standard. The reality is that you probably need both these packs in order to provide both the practical essentials of the work and the ideological cutting edge.

Educating Children with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties

Ware, J. (ed.)

Fulton, 1994, 177 pp.
Paperback £13.99.
ISBN 1-85346-329-9

This book sets out to explore the impact of recent research in the field of teaching pupils with profound and mulitple learning difficulties. It focuses on four main themes – inclusion (within schools for pupils with severe learning difficulties); the use of information technology; staff–pupil interaction; and early communication.

You have to wait to the end to get to the heart of the book – three powerful chapters, two of them by Jean Ware herself, about the practicalities of teaching pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Ware's chapter on classroom organisation looks at use of time, deployment of staff, pupil grouping and pupil interactions. The following chapter examines her notion of creating contingency-sensitive environments (broadly, situations in which pupils are likely to feel encouraged to respond) and deals with staff development issues; the quality of staff-pupil relationships; and generating effective feedback by monitoring staff-pupil interactions. Both these chapters are research-based, with thorough referencing, but they are particularly practical and full of ideas teachers will be eager to try in their own classrooms.

The final chapter of the book is by Judith Watson and explores intensive interaction in practice. In fact, it offers more of the kind of supportive case study material which illuminates Nind and Hewett's book so effectively. It also includes a brief summary of discussions with staff about the changes in their relationships with pupils after experimenting with the intensive interaction role. I would have liked to read more of this material.

Richard O'Connell's chapter evaluates the experiences of

two pupils, contrasting the quality of interactions in segregated and integrated learning situations. No firm conclusions are reached but the documented lack of interactive attempts made by peers towards pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties suggests two potential routes of further enquiry. Perhaps staff need to read Jean Ware's chapters in order to learn how to structure sessions around the active promotion of interaction. Perhaps pupils with severe learning difficulties need more experience with their profoundly disabled peers before they will learn how to interact with them successfully. Some examples of how this might occur are offered at the end of the chapter.

Sheila Glenn and Yvonne O'Brien's chapter on the use of information technology is, for me, less helpful. It concludes, in essence, that computers might be useful to pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, 'if used in an appropriate way', but that they are unlikely to offer an effective replacement for real people in social interactions. This seems to me to be a rather elaborate way to reveal what is essentially a nugget of common sense.

Judith Goldbart's chapter on communication is far more informative. It is packed with very detailed data, usually in the form of tables and charts. This does not make for easy reading although the chapter gives a very thorough picture of Goldbart's use of the now-familiar Uzgiris and Hunt and *Affective Communication Assessment* materials. If this is your special interest, you will find plenty to ponder in this chapter.

The remaining two chapters, one by Jean Ware with Ian Healey and one again by Ware alone, look at assessment styles and methodologies and the impact of the National Curriculum. Ware acknowledges that many of the points she raises have been upstaged by the Dearing review. It is a shame she did not either omit these now confusing sections or wait to take full account of the new, improved National Curriculum formula, especially when her discussion of the importance of following priority individual needs in the context of National Curriculum-related group activity is now, in many ways, even more relevant.

I have one other quibble. I feel the use of the 'PMLD' shorthand seems clumsy in a book, even though the authors stick to a 'people first' policy. Were the word limits so tight as to make this a necessity? The book clearly makes an important contribution, however, and staff in a variety of institutions will benefit from adding it to their shelves and using it as a reference resource.

Two other recent books follow the theme of interaction and communication but in different settings.

Working Together – inter-school collaboration for special needs

Lunt, I., Evans, J., Norwich, B. and Wedell, K.

Fulton, 1994. 101 pp.
Paperback £10.00.
ISBN 1-85346-301-9

This book describes research into different kinds of co-operation between schools and the principles behind such initiatives. Most space is devoted to the notion of 'clustering' whereby schools share development or resources for the sake of efficiency and consensus. For the many special schools engaging in various forms of collaboration, and for those considering such strategies, this will be a useful way to compare notes.

Support Services and the Curriculum – a practical guide to collaboration.

Lacey, P and Lomas, J.

Fulton, 1993. 224 pp.
Paperback £12.99
ISBN 1-85346-222-5

Lacey and Lomas' book is aimed specifically at people working together in order to meet pupils' individual needs. It details the work that support services actually do; deals with staff development issues; and explores the relationship between that work and curriculum and assessment procedures. If you wish to promote transdisciplinary, collaborative practice among your colleagues in order to provide a better service for pupils and parents, then this book offers a wealth of practical ways forward.

Richard Byers March 1995

BOOKS

Innovations in Family Support for People with Learning Disabilities edited by Peter Mittler and Helle Mittler, published by Lizieux Hall Publications

Early learning step by step. Children with vision impairment and multiple disabilities by Lilli Neilsen, published by Sikon 1993 ISBN 87 601 39980 3

The Massage and Aromatherapy Workbook by Avril McConnell. Available from Jade College of Natural Therapy, 12 Jenkyn Road, Wootton, Bedford, MK43 9HE

RESOURCES

Videos

Creativity with people with learning difficulties: Practical ideas with and without equipment Caroline Allen and Helen Mackay 1993
Available from Orchard Hill Further Educatin Centre, 6 Elm Avenue, Orchard Hill, Queen Mary's Avenue, Carshalton SM5 4NR
Tel: 0181 770 8125

Massage Vol. 1 demonstrated by Avril McConnell £14.99
Available from Avril McConnell, Jade College of Natural Therapy, 12 Jenkyn Road, Wootton, Bedford MK43 9HE

Multisensory Action Pack. Developed by a multidisciplinary team for people with profound and multiple learning disabilities. £35.00 +£1.50 p&p
Available from NBT Informatin Technology Ltd., Thornescroft Gardens, Branston, Burton on Trent, staffs DE14 3GL

Audio

RNIB Education Information Tape for Families in Ten Languages.
The tape introduces blind and partially signted children and their families to the wide range of educational services available to them .
Available from RNIB Education Information Service, 224 Great Portland Street, London W1N 6AA Tel: 0171 388 1266

Creativity with people with learning disabilities:
Practical ideas with and without equipment

Caroline Allen and Helen Mackay, 1993, £17.50 incl. p&p
Orchard Hill Further Education Centre, 6 Elm Avenue, Orchard Hill, Queen Mary's Avenue, Charshalton SM5 4NR. Tel: 0181 770 8125

Many times when visitors watch videos in Planet's resource centre, or I use them in training workshops, people say "But our clients are much more severely disabled" or "I could do more if I was working in an ideal situation like that". Not with this video. The students at Orchard Hill have very severe disabilities, the staff are shown working on a one to one basis despite interruptions and distractions, and there is little expensive equipment around. What shines through the whole video is the staff's sensitivity, the way they build on the slightest response from the student, and the trusting and relaxed atmosphere.

The 25 minute video forms part of the training package which has been designed for people working with adults who have profound multiple disabilities, who have had little or no previous experience or training. It is the first of three video training packs, the other two will be "Making equipment with students" and "Holding it together in a theme".

The guidelines manual and the video are divided into three sections:

Part 1: Creativity on a budget -
practical applications for cheap equipment

Part 2: Taking Control-
use of adapted switches to affect the environment

Part 3: Building Relationships -
ways in which we can support development without equipment through person-to-person interaction

The manual is easy to read and includes practical ideas, notes on each section of the video and a useful list of articles and books for further reading. The video is a compilation of short clips with good use of captions and voice over. The technical quality of the filming is variable because all the footage was shot during real sessions, rather than being staged for the camera. This does not detract from the content - it encourages the viewer to think "I could try that".

This training pack will be useful for parents, carers and staff and I look forward to seeing the next two packs!

Judy Denziloe, PLANET

Training: Courses/Conferences

MAY

18th — RNIB Leisure Resource Day
A chance to discover new leisure activities for adults with visual and learning disabilities. Exhibition (free) and workshops (£1.00 each)
Venue: Parkside Hotel, Bristol
Further details: 0171-388-1266

27th — Sherborne Movement
Level 1 Part 1 Basic Introductory Course
Venue: The Sherborne Centre, Bristol
Further details: Sherborne Foundation UK 0117-961-0010

JUNE

3rd — Tai-Chi Developmental Movement
This course is open to all
Venue: Sherborne Centre, Bristol
Further details: Sherborne Foundation UK 0117-961-0010

9th — Using the Body to Learn
Bodily experiences, massage and relaxation
Leader: Flo Longhorn
Venue: Manchester Conference Centre, UMIST
Further details: Catalyst 01483-223707

9th — MENCAP/*bild* Conference
Provision of Day Services to people with learning disabilities.
Good practice in Employment, Leisure, Adult and Further Education, Community Living. Displays and exhibitions
Keynote speaker: Simon Whitehead
Deputy Director, NDT
Venue: Birmingham
Further details: Jenny May or Liz Howells -1562-850251

12th — Challenging Behaviour
Safeguards, stategies and sensory solutions
Leader: Flo Longhorn
Venue: Millwharf Conference Centre, Birmingham
Further details: Catalyst 01483-223707

13th — Sex Education for Learners with PMLD
Common sense and sensory strategies
Leader: Flo Longhorn
Venue: Liverpool University
Further details: Catalyst 01483-223707

14th — Self-Advocacy
For learners with SLD and PMLD
Leader: Catherine Attridge
Venue: Westminster College, Oxford
Further details: Catalyst 01483-223707

14th — Horticultural Therapy Great London Flower Show
Flower show with sales, competitions, stalls and more.
Venue: Demonstration Garden, Battersea Park
Further details: Horticultural Therapy 01373-464782

14th
15th — NAIDEX Northern Exhibition
Venue: Doncaster Racecourse
Further information from Fiona Heakin 0181-910-7873

15th — Sensory Curriculum - National Curriculum:
Educating the senses for very special people
Leader: Flo Longhorn
Venue: University of East Anglia, Norwich
Further details: Catalyst 01483-223707

16th — Self Advocacy
for learners with SLD and PMLD
Leader: Catherine Attridge
Venue: Guildford Cathedral, Surrey
Further details: Catalyst 01483-223707

20th — Challenging Behaviour
Safeguards, strategies and sensory solutions
Leader: Flo Longhorn
Venue: National Society RE Centre, London
Further details: Catalyst 01483-223707

21st — Class Assistants' Training Day
for people who supporr learners with special needs
Leader: Flo Longhorn
Venue: National Society Re Centre, London
Further details: Catalyst 01483-223070

27th — Vision '95
Exhibition designed for visually impaired children, their families, carers and professionals. Information on goods, services, advice training and employment opportunities.
Venue: Kensington Town Hall, London W8 7NX
Further details: Jennifer Makin, 0171-388-1266

JULY

12th
26th — Horticultural Therapy
Two day course
Venue: HDRA Ryton Gardens, Nr. Coventry
Further details: Jill McChesney 01373 464782

AUGUST

3rd — Horticulture Therapy
Venue: Victoria Horticulture, Poole, Dorset
Further details as above

SEPTEMBER

18th to 21st — *bild* 1995 International Conference
People with Learning Disabilities who Challenge Services
Workshops, Partnership sessions and Poster sessions.
Venue: Oxford
Further details: Jenny May or Liz Howells 01562-850251

27th to 29th — NAIDEX International
Venue: Wembley Exhibition Centre, London
Further details as above.

OCTOBER

13th 14th 15th — 1995 U.K. Sherborne Foundation Gathering
A weekend to meet and share with an emphasis on fun.
Workshops will reflect this.
Further details: Peter Bruckenwell 01886-821104

NOVEMBER

22nd — RNIB Leisure Resource Day
Another chance to discover new leisure activities for adults with visual and learning disabilities. Exhibition (free) and workshop sessions (£1.00 each)
Venue: Martineau Education Centre, Birmingham
Further details: RNIB 0171 388 1266

TRAINING PACKS

Planning for the Future - wills, trusts and residential provision for people who have profound and multiple disabilities.. A worshop training package in support of parents and carers by Lydia Sinclair and Helen Mount..£42.50 (incl. p&p) Available from MENCAP PIMD Section, Piper Hill SChool, 200 Yew Tree Lane, Northenden, Manchester M23 0FF

The development of early Communication and Feeding for people who have profound and multiple disabilities by Juliet Goldbart, Jenny Warner and Helen Mount 1944, £42.50
Available from MENCAP PIMD Section, as above.

DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES

1995/96 THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Distance Education Courses designed for people (usually, but not always, teachers) working with learners with disabilities. Students remain in their own work setting and the courses cionsist of regional and national day and weekend seminars, together with materials specially developed for home study.
Course titles: Learning Difficulties
Multi-sensory Impairment
Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities
Further details: Admissions Office 0121-414-4887

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