

PMLD LINK

WELCOME TO PMLD LINK - ISSUE 3.

This issue coincides with the first anniversary of the H.M.I. P.M.L.D. course at Westhill College, Birmingham. The membership of P.M.L.D. Link has grown during that time, which positively reflects the levels of interest amongst special educators in providing a meaningful education for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

The search for information and methods that will enable us to do this task successfully continues. By chance, the contributions to this issue reflect the in-service training needs of staff in relation to P.M.L.D. children.

I am grateful to Carol Ouvry for writing the introduction to this issue. Carol is now actively involved in providing in-service training for a range of professionals under the auspices of Castle Priory College. Carol has endeavoured to compile a weekend course, to take place in March, on 'Profoundly Handicapped Children: Management & Teaching. It is a reflection of her thorough understanding of the children that she has considered in her course programme such a range of broad and diverse p.m.l.d. related issues. Maybe we will have a report of her course in the summer issue of 'P.M.L.D. LINK'?

We need more contributions for 'P.M.L.D. LINK'!
H.M.I. Lambert Bignell asks if anyone has considered PMLD pupils and the National Curriculum? Comments please?

Best wishes.

Barry Carpenter.

March, 1989.

PMLD LINK

I have been asked to write an introduction for this third issue of PMLD LINK but first of all I must congratulate Barry and his team for finding the time and the enthusiasm to keep PMLD LINK going. It is nearly a year since the idea was first suggested and Barry offered to take on the task of editing and distribution. I have found it enjoyable and informative and I am sure it has an important part to play in keeping those of us who have a particular interest in pupils who are most dependent, impaired, disadvantaged (call it what you will) in touch with others who share this interest, and are concerned with the issues involved in working with them. These contacts are not necessarily easy to make or keep up in our day to day work, and the only way to keep a broad view and find out about new approaches may be through attending courses and now, through PMLD LINK.

The demands for training which are being created by the changes in education means that very specialized courses are not a priority within LEAs and may also mean that funding to attend outside courses is hard, or even impossible, to get. On the bright side however, there are more courses and study days which are relevant to working with PMLD youngsters. It is encouraging to know that some of the SEN Diploma Courses now include options on working with PMLD pupils. For those of you who can get to London for a day it is worthwhile looking out for conferences/study days at the Royal Society of Medicine organized by the Forum on Mental Retardation. Don't let this name put you off! Some of these are relevant to our work and as the speakers are often very eminent in their field it is a good way of keeping up with the research and other issues. BIMH also organizes one-day conferences in various parts of the country on relevant topics in addition to the five-day regular which they run twice a year. There are no doubt other courses which are organized at a more local level, and I am sure that I am not the only reader who would be interested to hear about any courses that other people have attended.

Those of you who read the back page of Issue No. 2 will know that we are also running a 3-day course at Castle Priory, and will certainly be running others in the future. The problem with planning a course is not what to put in, but what to leave out! Particularly difficult when you do not know who will be coming on the course. This one will be something of a pilot and I shall know when I read the course evaluations whether the focus was just about right, or way off beam! If any of you have suggestions for the content of future PMLD courses - topics to include, speakers you have found interesting and useful (not necessarily the same thing), the balance between talks and participatory workshops, issues of particular interest, - please let me know for future planning.

One of my main concerns on a personal level is how to keep in touch with the changing scene in the PMLD field now that I have left the "shop floor" and I am relying on PMLD LINK to be my hotline to what is going on in schools. I look forward to my copy very much and hope that it will have another successful year, and will not become too unmanageable for Barry and his staff at Blythe School. My thanks to all of you for making PMLD LINK possible.

Carol Ouvry
February 1989

3/84
Impressions of Sherborne Movement in Belgium

I have recently spent two days in Belgium with my husband George Hill, (ref. Veronica Sherborne's film Building Bridges, for those of you who have seen it) where we ran a two day course on Sherborne Movement. It was quite an experience!

On the Friday we worked with 120 people and on the Saturday 80 people took part.

The incredible thing about the participants was that they were all using the method in their many varied work situations but no-one had received any practical training - the only information they had acquired concerning the movement was through written articles initiated by one person who had come to England and spent time with Veronica Sherborne back in 1981 - such was their committment and enthusiasm for this type of approach.

It was gratifying to hear that not only is the movement being used in Belgium in schools for children with severe learning difficulties, but also with children who are emotionally and behaviourly disturbed. It is also used extensively by psychologists and therapists working with visually and hearing impaired children and with those having psycho-motoric problems. It is also included within the programme offered in family therapy clinics.

Our course was very well received. Although the movement was already being used, feedback from the participants suggested that they appreciated more fully the value of the method having experienced it for themselves.

Due to the fact that these people had had very little first hand knowledge of the movement it was considered important that the course also gave them the opportunity, not only to do the movement, but also the chance to acquire some understanding of it's background philosophy and theory. This was implemented by means of a talk, supported by use of an OHP and demonstration.

The organizers of the Belgian course intend to arrange follow-up workshops and regular newsletter type links for interested people. There was a general feeling amongst the course participants that they should have the opportunity from time to time to share experiences, discuss problems and to evaluate the effects the movement is having on their various client groups.

Both George and I felt the course was a valuable experience both for ourselves and for the participants. A movement course as are many courses, is a two way process in which we not only impart skills, but also receive new ideas which come through the creativity of those taking part.

I personally rate the value of Sherborne Movement very highly for all people with Special Educational needs. I appreciated very much the opportunity to share my enthusiasm with our new colleagues in Belgium.

I would be very interested to hear from anyone who is using the movement in this country. Perhaps we could all get together sometime, somewhere, in the future to share experiences and exchange ideas.

What about it?

Cyndi Hill
1 The Vale
Parkfield
Pucklechurch
Avon BS17 3NW

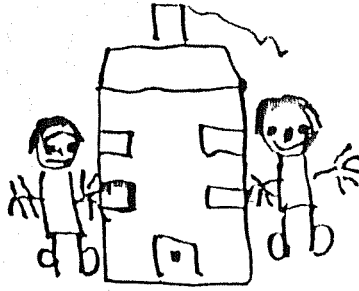
Bedfordshire Education Service

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ST. JOHN'S SCHOOL

Bedford Road

Kempston

Bedford MK42 8AB

ULTRA VIOLET LIGHT AND SAFETY ASPECTS

Whilst on holiday in the States last summer, I met a professional diver who was researching the use of UVL for deep sea diving work. He accessed me to information which may be of interest to those schools who use UVL in their work.

Taken from Orme catalogue Ltd:

Ultraviolet light is an invisible band of electromagnetic radiation just beyond the violet end of the visible spectrum. This band is generally divided into three regions that differ in their effect upon the human body.

The SHORT WAVELENGTH region, also known as far ultraviolet, germicidal or UV-C, extends from 180-280nm. Although it has little penetrating power, short wave UV can cause severe burns to the eyes and skin. When short wave UV affects the eyes, the discomfort is commonly known as "welder's flash" or "ground glass eyeball." The usual artificial sources of this radiation are low pressure, mercury vapor lamps (and certain other metal vapor lamps) used in UV sterilization, chromatography, mineralogy, EPROM erasing, photochemical reactions, etc.

The MEDIUM WAVELENGTH region, also known as middle ultraviolet, erythema or UV-B, extends from 280-320nm. It has high penetrating power and can seriously burn the eyes and skin. The usual artificial sources of this radiation are "sun lamps" used for cosmetic or therapeutic purposes and vitamin production.

The LONG WAVELENGTH region, also known as near ultraviolet, black light, Wood's light or UV-A, extends from 320-380nm. A portion of the population is overly sensitive to radiation in this region of the spectrum and may ex-

perience adverse effects. For example, some people experience "blue haze" interference when viewing sources of long wave UV due to the fluorescent effects in the ocular media. The usual artificial sources of this radiation are low and medium pressure mercury vapor lamps used in NDT and QC inspection, medical diagnosis, UV curing, general fluorescence analysis, etc.

Ultraviolet light is a natural part of our environment, most commonly found in sunlight. Everyone is exposed to UV sources, natural and/or artificial, on a daily basis. However, unprotected and prolonged exposure to any form of UV light, including long wave UV, can result in cataracts and possibly cancer. Even brief exposure can be hazardous if the UV intensity is very high. Thus it is advised that the eyes *always* be shielded for maximum personal safety. When utilizing medium or short wave ultraviolet, the face and skin should additionally be protected.

Certain individuals are naturally hypersensitive to *all* forms of UV and should avoid any exposure. These individuals usually know whether or not they are hypersensitive. In general, if itching, inflammation or other unusual symptoms occur, UV exposure should cease immediately. People using certain drugs that produce photosensitivity should avoid exposure to all UV sources.

I have corresponded with a supplier in New York and tracked down a supplier of safety equipment in this country:

Transmission in the entire UVL range is 10^{-5} .

Spectacles.....£11 (u56-100)

Goggles.....£13 20 (u56-120)

Face shield.....£38 50 (u56-140)

The address is: Orme Scientific Ltd, Middleton, Manchester.

Telephone: 061 653 4589

Best wishes,

School-based In-Service Training

Re: the Education of Children with Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties.

At Blythe School our whole school in-service priority for 1988/89 was related to PMLD children and students. With all p.m.l.d. children now integrated throughout our SLD classes there was a need for all staff to be skilled in the management, handling and educational needs of this group of children/students. An inset bid was made to the Warwickshire Education Department, and an allowance made under their Grist programme.

This funding has paid for each class teacher to be released for one day, with supply cover, to make home visits to the families of p.m.l.d. children in their class. This enabled parents to share their very specific knowledge of their child with the class teacher, and for parent and teacher together to set educational goals for the child.

A two-day Workshop (using Baker days) was organized for February. Day One focussed on 'Sherborne Movement' and was led by Cyndi Hill from Bristol, who was a member of the H.M.I. PMLD course last April. Day Two concentrated on the potential of natural therapies with p.m.l.d. children, and was led by Ann Childs, a physiotherapist and natural health practitioner. Both days were attended by Blythe teachers, teachers from other County SLD schools, classroom assistants, Y.T.S. trainees, residential staff from local hostels, supply teachers/assistants, governors, and, most importantly, parents. Alan Tompkins has written up an account of these two days.

A ten week in-service programme was also designed to support this initiative. The topics staff nominated were presented in a series of one-hour after school sessions. These included microtechnology for p.m.l.d. pupils; handling and physical management; feeding programmes; post-16 provision and a sensory curriculum ideas workshop. Various staff led these sessions, as did the physiotherapist and speech therapist and the session on Observation Techniques was led by Ann Lewis, a Lecturer from the University of Warwick.

Of particular note were the videos hired to start the course. The first, 'Shared Concern', deals with how parents receive the news that their child is handicapped, and the bereavement response that follows.

This video was made by parents, and powerfully portrays their very real feelings about how the news is broken.

We were interested in looking at other modes of practice, particularly residential facilities. Two videos supplied by Dr. Barnardos gave us an excellent insight into some innovative provision at Croxteth Park.

The supply addresses for the videos are:

'Shared Concern' Video:

from: CFL Vision,
P.O. Box 35,
Wetherby,
West Yorkshire. LS23 7EX
(Tel: 0937 541010)

'The Art of the Possible'

'A very Special Relationship'

(discuss the work of Croxteth Park Project for p.m.l.d. children)

from: Barnardo's Film Library,
Dr. Barnardo's,
Tanners Lane,
Barkingside,
Essex. IG6 1QG.
(Tel: 01 550 8822 Ext: 390)

An opportunity to 'put into practice' what you have learnt is always valuable, and to this end Mary Evans, our PMLD Co-Ordinator organized a 'Sensory Day' for the children. Using mixed age and ability groups the children rotated between five bases which offered:

1. Sherborne Movement
2. Relaxation and Massage
3. Auditory Stimulation (echo feedback, computer programmes etc.)
4. Visual Stimulation (Light stimulation room)
5. Taste Experiences (Home Economics Room)

The 'taste' theme has been further developed by Gill Holwill, Senior Teacher, who used it as a sensory component of our Ethnic Arts Week, alongside the music, dance and costumes. The children displayed a range of responses (some unrepeatable!) depending on whether the taste

was of Indian, Chinese or Afro-Caribbean origin!

Obviously we hope that this in-service programme will have raised staff awareness of the needs of p.m.l.d. children and students, and their ability to make a considered and meaningful educational response.

Barry Carpenter,
Headteacher,
Blythe School.

BRITISH INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HANDICAP

SOUTHERN DIVISION
ONE DAY WORKSHOP



SENSORY CURRICULUM FOR VERY SPECIAL PEOPLE -

A PRACTICAL APPROACH

TO CURRICULUM PLANNING (1988)

The Special Needs Unit, Prior Close, St. Lawrence Way,
Slough, Berkshire

SATURDAY, 17th JUNE, 1989

MIDLANDS DIVISION
ONE DAY CONFERENCE



**ALTERNATIVES FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN
AND YOUNG ADULTS WITH PROFOUND MULTIPLE**

LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Pens Meadow School, Wordsley, Stourbridge, West Midlands

MONDAY, 5th June, 1989

SOUTH WESTERN DIVISION

ONE DAY CONFERENCE

THE USE OF LIGHT STIMULATION



WITH PEOPLE WITH PROFOUND AND MULTIPLE

LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Fiveways, Kingswood, Bristol, Avon

WEDNESDAY, 14th JUNE, 1989

If you would like further details about any of the above educational events, please tick and return the form to:

The British Institute of Mental Handicap
Wolverhampton Road, Kidderminster
Worcs. DY10 3PP

Please send contributions to PMLD Link and S.A.E.'s to:

Barry Carpenter,
Blythe School,
Packington Lane,
Coleshill,
Birmingham B46 3JE.

TWO TRAINING DAYS

Deciding how to begin to share our two in-service training days was quite difficult. I did think of "Thank you Mr. Baker" but dismissed it - quickly - as going a bit too far! But thanks are certainly due and they go to Cyndi Hill and Ann Childs for presenting two very full and exceedingly enjoyable days at Blythe.

Wednesday the 15th February was devoted to a Sherborne Movement Workshop with Cyndi and for sixty people the day began by taking off shoes and socks and sitting on the floor. There was a large semi-circle of people - we must have looked a bit like a very large protractor - with Cyndi sitting at the centre point surrounded by wide open space. Everything changed by the end of the day. Not only were we all very familiar with how hard our hall floor really is (!) but space was at a premium as we practiced rolling, sliding, rocking, swaying - singly or in groups (and more often in heaps), enthusiastically exploring the range of movement techniques Cyndi demonstrated to us so brilliantly.

It was a good day, a fun day - but it was fun with a purpose. We were presented with the ideas and concepts of movement and given the opportunity to experience, through a variety of activities, how confidence and self esteem can be encouraged and positive relationships, through shared movement experiences, developed. By sharing these ideas in a very practical way, and actively participating, enabled us to gain first hand knowledge of what a particular activity felt like. Was it relaxing? Was being dragged along in a blanket as an exciting movement experience as it appeared to be? Did we always feel safe and if not why not, and how could we present the activity so that it did offer safety, security and pleasure? And throughout it all was the underlying purpose of how these activities could be used to extend the experiences of the pupils and students we work with for physiotherapy, education or for sheer enjoyment.

In one of the handouts that Cyndi gave us she explained that movements fall into six basic categories, leading to:

1. body awareness)
2. spatial awareness)increased confidence in the environment
3. increased concentration and attention skills
4. the forming of positive relationships with another person
5. the forming of positive relationships within a group of people
6. creative movement leading to dance

By the end of the day we had had the chance to have a go at many activities. It is not easy to explain the sensation one gets from a free-flow movement activity when the power source is provided by someone else, or to describe how you feel when being rocked from side to side, encircled by a pair of safe and secure arms. You need to experience it for yourself and, having done so, assess whether the feeling you had during the activity is one which your students and pupils would enjoy.

We took pictures throughout the day and to try to give you a 'flavour' of the day one or two (with brief explanations of what is going on) are reproduced. The reproduction is not all that good but I hope it will give you some idea, but to really get to know what it is all about you have to do it yourself.



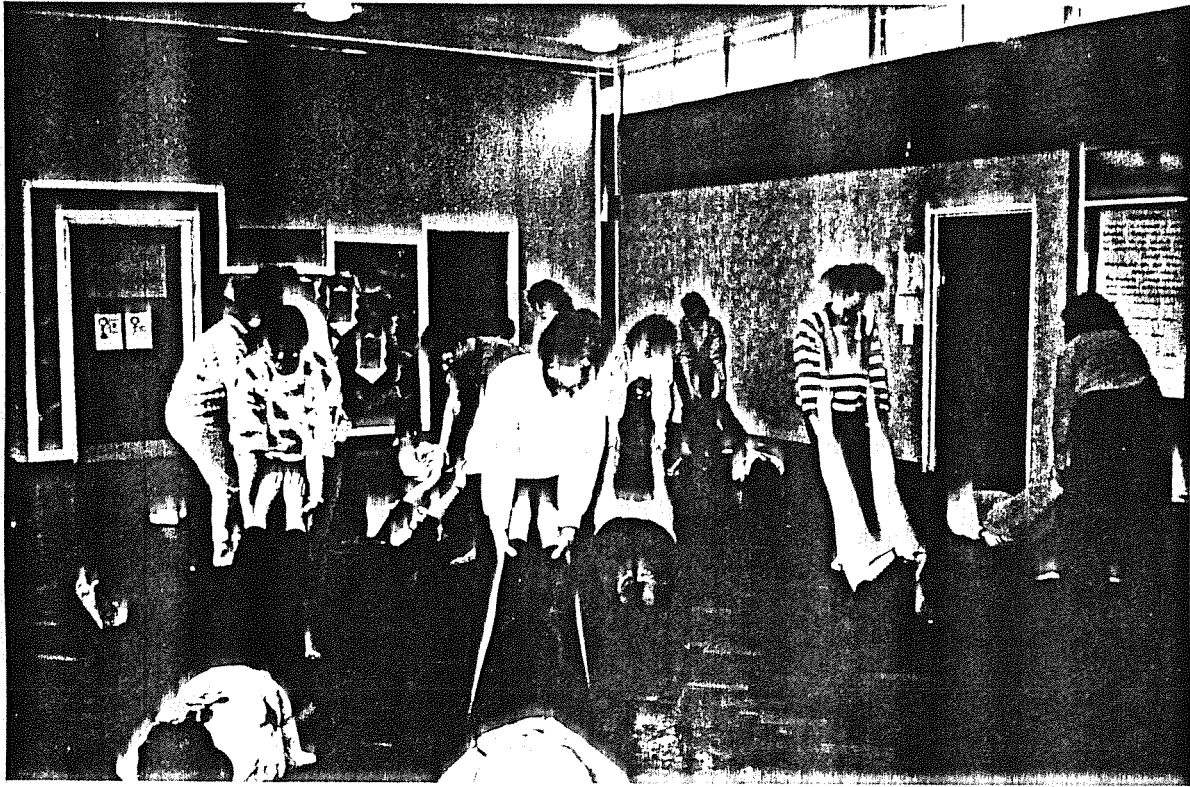
Getting to know the floor, letting the floor take our weight, relaxing while Cyndi tells the group a little more about what the day has in store.



Still on the floor, this time spinning around on our tummies. This was followed by travelling around in pathways, still on our tummies, and the same thing lying on our backs.



Working in pairs we explored forces, mirroring movements, creating patterns just using our bodies. This helped to develop trust, co-operation and concentration, as well as a great deal of physical exercise.



Being towed along, by your ankles or by your arms, or lying in a blanket is as much fun as it looks and it is also very relaxing. It also builds up trust in that you have to rely on the person towing not to crash you into the other people, a wall..... The feeling is quite like being in water and being towed along - quite special.



Our second training day on Thursday the 16th February was just as exciting and a little less energetic - at least to start with! Ann led us through what was, for many I am sure, a new vocabulary and a new approach to body awareness and what our bodies can tell us. To begin we looked at energy forces and meridian pathways within our bodies. We explored how the energy could be focussed by directing or re-directing, almost realigning, along the meridian pathways in order to achieve a balance. This was a very personal experience and although we worked in pairs, response and reactions were very individual. One of the most fascinating areas of Ann's workshop was Muscle Testing. With some trepidation we approached this - was it to be some arm-wrestling and strength contest? Nothing could be further from the truth. Muscle testing is a way of beginning from a position of 'strength', asking 'questions' of your body, and then testing again to judge the body's reaction. It sounds complicated and difficult - and to do it properly requires a great deal of practice, both in administering the test and interpreting the results - but we did try and our initial results were staggering and revelations a little mind-blowing. Just to give one example. Ann asked for a volunteer to test bodily reaction to carrots. She first did a muscle test - which is done by holding out an arm, firmly but not tensed while the "tester" with one arm resting lightly on the opposite shoulder to the extended arm, presses (if presses is the right word); rests with gentle pressure might be a little more accurate, on the extended arm. A strong muscle is when the arm stays where it is, no movement. A weak muscle is when the arm dips (all this with sincere apologies to Ann for this very simplistic explanation)

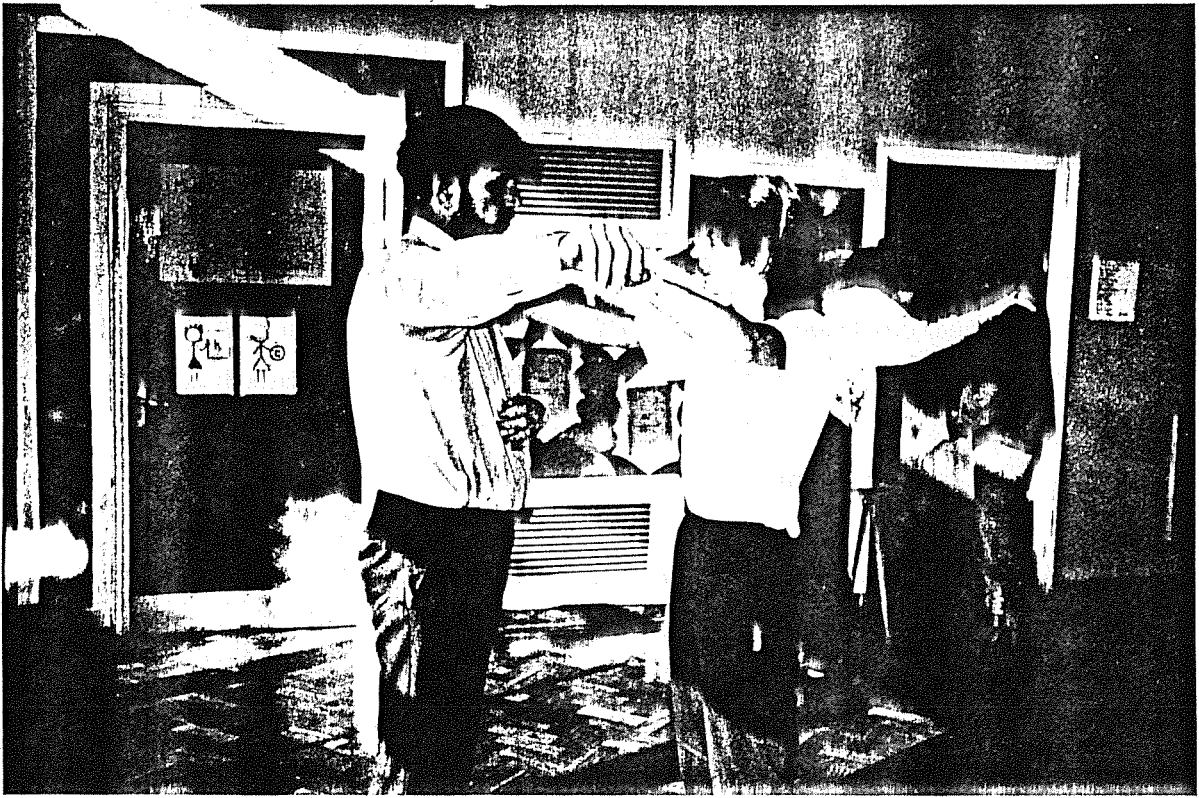
To return to the carrots. Ann did the test - it was strong, and then gave Bob the carrot to hold. Tested again - still strong. Ann then gave Bob another carrot which looked decidedly 'sick'. Ann tested again. Still the muscle was strong. Finally Ann gave Bob the original carrot and did another muscle test. This time the muscle was weak. Explanation: the first carrot was grown using chemicals. In the absence of anything else Bob's body said 'O.K. I can live with that'. The second carrot was grown organically and when this was presented the body said 'I like that one better' so that when the original carrot was represented the body rejected it in favour of the rather sick looking but organically grown vegetable. It is rather a long winded explanation and still does not do justice to the muscle testing technique but the implications for its use with pupils and students is enormous.

For example, a Mum had a child who just would not sleep and asked for help. The child was tested for colours, again using the muscle test, to judge his reactions. It was revealed that his most positive (strong muscle) reaction came from the colour red. That same night his Mum wrapped the child up in a bright red cardigan and put him to bed. He slept through the night for the first time ever. Similar experiments were carried out with various members of the group to test for reactions to tea, coffee, brown bread, white bread - the list goes on and on - and the results were very illuminating.

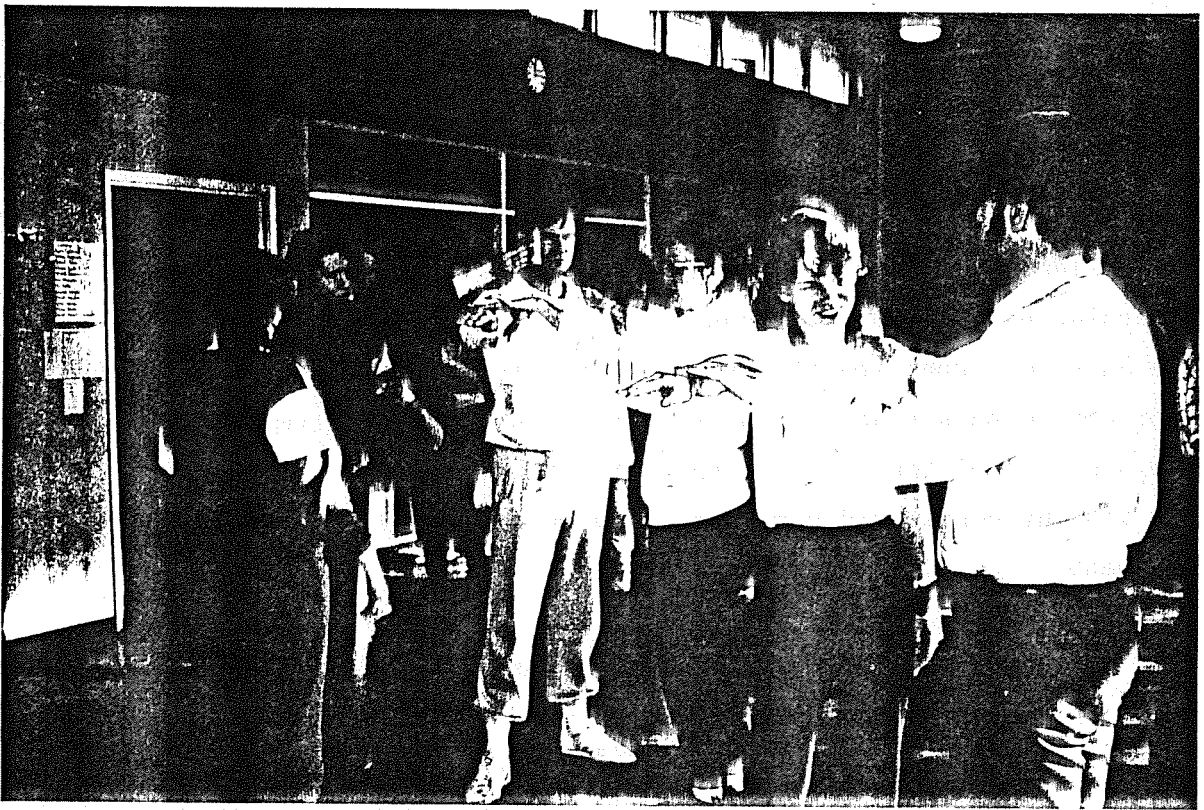
We also worked on massage and relaxation techniques using a range of oils or just by touch. Ann brought along several books and in one were details of points on the body which relate directly to areas within the brain, or which have a direct bearing upon other parts of the body and its reactions. For example, the release of stress can be helped by massaging the pectoral muscle area, applying gentle massage to two points at the back of the head where the neck joins the skull and then placing hands, very lightly upon the persons brow. Again, this is related to muscle testing and the stress is released when the previously weak muscle test becomes strong.

Using the body and relaxing oils was a delight. Ann makes up her own oils and each one offers different therapy. Some were stimulating, others relaxing depending on the ingredients. Ann also talked to the group about how the body is reflected in the feet and the ear - the shape of the ear (upside down) is a reflection of a foetus - and by massaging the ear a particular part of the body can be influenced. Similarly foot massage can have an effect upon specific parts of the body but Ann did warn that it is important to know exactly what you are doing before attempting to focus in upon one area of the body. Far better to stick to general massage with free flowing gentle and continuous movements rather than any specific treatment.

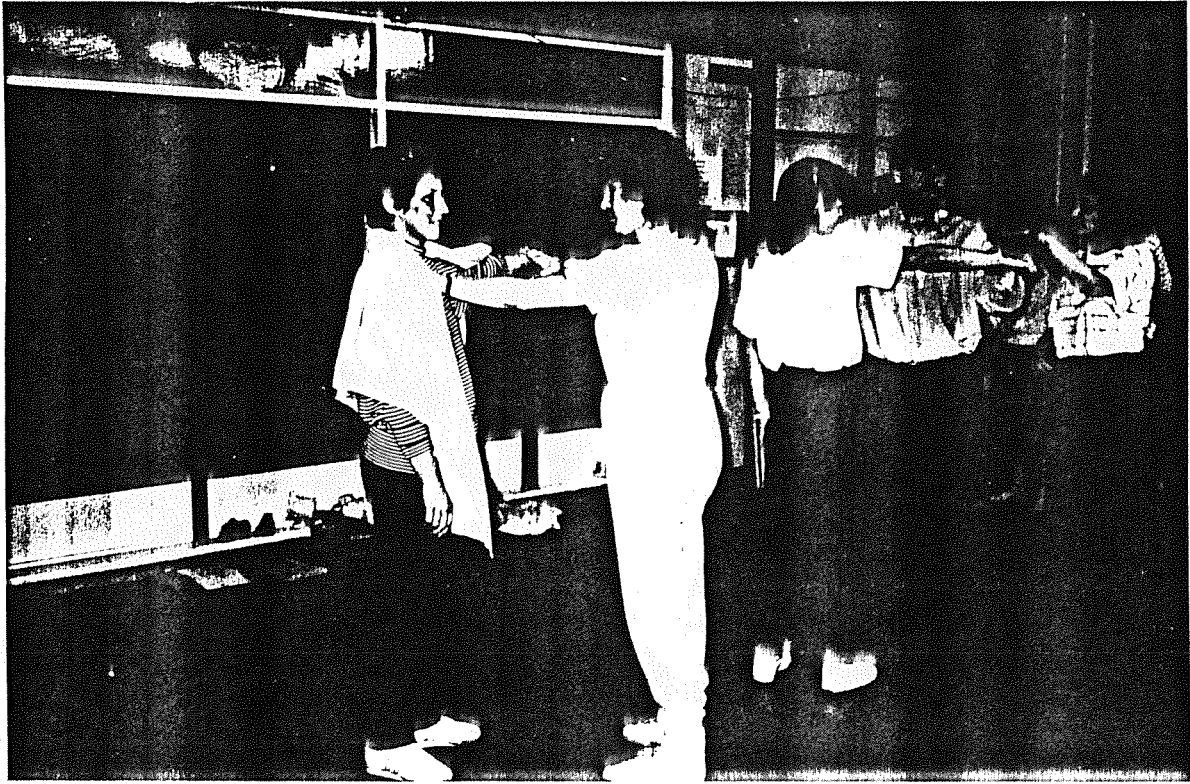
I am very conscious that I am attempting to report an event that was very new, very exciting and with many, many applications for the p.m.l.d. pupils and students. It would take a book to do justice to all that happened during the day - and another to explore how the techniques could be used with our pupils. Again, to try to give a (second) flavour there are one or two pictures.....



The muscle testing technique in action!



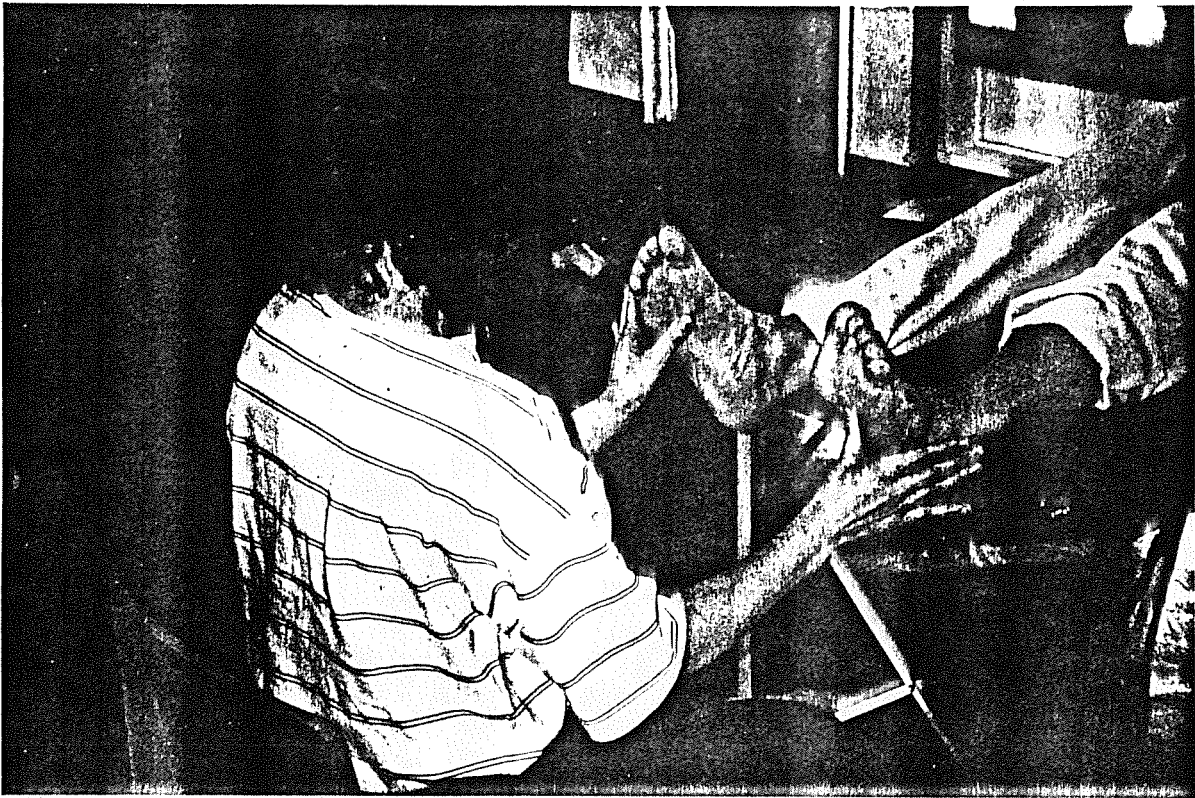
Muscle testing being used to check bodily reactions to a variety of products and substances.



Muscle testing to assess reaction to colours



Massage - in practice. A wonderful sensation.



Ann demonstrating the art and skill of massage and showing us a particular technique for relaxation and tension release.

This is a very personal account of two rather special days but I hope it has served to whet some of your appetites to know more about Movement and Aromatherapy, and that my own enthusiasm has permeated through the wordage.

If you have the opportunity to attend a workshop session on either subject then do try to go. If either session is led by Cyndi Hill or Ann Childs then grab the opportunity with both hands - you will not be disappointed.

Thank you Cyndi.....Thank you Ann.....for two very exciting days.

Alan Tompkins
Post-16 P.M.L.D. Co-ordinator
Blythe School