

PMILD**LINK**

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

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

Winter is nearly over, much to many people's delight, and here at last is the Winter issue of PMLD-Link which I hope will add to any feelings of renewal and new things to come. This time I make no apologies for the lateness, because so many interesting and varied articles have been sent in. The theme of music, movement and dance has revealed many different activities and projects taking place, and people have found the time to write and tell us about what they are doing. Many of the articles are about dance, but music and movement are also represented. Some are written by specialists, but most are by practitioners describing their own hands on work. As always, we are very grateful to everyone who has contributed to this issue, and helped to make it such a fund of ideas.

The theme for Number 33 is Advocacy - a much debated issue at the moment and one which presents enormous challenges for people with work with and care for people with profound learning disabilities. Christina Tilstone has opened the debate in **Future Focus** at the end of this issue, and we do hope that many people will feel able to write in on this topic - any length, from half a page to four or five pages will be welcomed. You may like to put some of the questions you have to other readers, to share your ideas and experiences with them or to let us know if you have found any resources or literature which have been particularly helpful. Most importantly, you don't necessarily have to have 'got it right', for your ideas and experience to be of value to others - what not to do can be just as helpful to hear about when starting out on such an uncharted trail. Be brave, tell us about it!

Many readers value highly the reviews section which has been produced and often part written by Richard Byers. Unfortunately, Richard is no longer able to carry on due to pressure of work. Our grateful thanks to him for all the time he has put in on our behalf over the last few years, finding new resources and putting together informative reviews about them. Fortunately, Ann Fergusson has agreed to replace Richard as reviews editor, and we look forward to having her as a member of the editorial team. No-one can know what is being published in all aspects of work with people with PMLD so Ann will rely upon others to let her know about new publications and resources. If you know of any recent publications or published materials relevant to people with PMLD, please let Ann know. Her address is 17 All Saints Road, Peterborough PE1 2QT
Tel. 01733 312627

PMLD-Link has just acquired a new and (at the moment nervous breakdown inducing) computer which at the moment seems to be inhabited by gremlins. Learning how it works feels like breaking in a young horse, it is constantly doing unexpected things, or refusing to do things it was happy to do last time I used it! Nevertheless, you can now contact us by e-mail on: **PMLD@mansell.wyenet.co.uk**

BUSINESS MATTERS

Subscriptions

This is the first issue of the subscription year 1998/99 so if you have not yet renewed your subscription, please do this as soon as possible. This is the last issue you will receive if your subscription is not up to date. I have included a letter to jog your memory if your subscription is still outstanding, but if you have recently sent it, please ignore this and accept my apologies. The current database is rather unreliable, for some reason it does not print some names even when they are up to date. I am hoping to transfer to the new computer before the next issue.

Articles

Articles or any other material for the next issue should reach me by 12th April. They can be sent through the post or by e-mail to the following addresses:

Carol Ouvry (editor)

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Wheelchair Dancing at Rose Hill School

Rose Hill School in Worcester caters for pupils with physical disabilities (90 on roll) of whom about half have profound and multiple learning difficulties. Wheelchair dancing has over the years become a very popular activity with pupils with pml and staff alike.

It began over 12 years ago when one of our physiotherapists attended a course on wheelchair dancing. At that time many of the pupils were much more able than our current population and were able to propel themselves in their chairs and wheelchair dancing became a regular event on the timetable. However, when the dances became too familiar the session was dropped for a couple of years.

With new staff came a resurgence of interest and it was re-introduced with pupils with pml as part of Departmental activities on Friday afternoons when other classes were having 'free play' etc. Having dancing as a departmental activity meant that we had a large group of pupils to ensure a lively, exciting session and enough staff to push the pupils in their chairs for, by now, the pupils involved were a lot more dependent on adults to access them to this activity.

Initially we used the dances that had been popular in the past and in fact we still do! These are adapted folk dances that vary in speed and formation (i.e. in pairs, circles, lines etc.). Once again they became a little too familiar but instead of dropping the sessions we decided to expand our 'repertoire' and began making up dances to pop songs. This also coincided with a change in the format of the Christmas productions with each class performing their own separate item and consequently the classes with pupils with pml have performed many dances based around the theme of the production (e.g. Christmas around the world, Old Time Musical Hall etc.). In addition they have performed dances at special school assemblies and Summer Fetes.

Another exciting area of work where wheelchair dancing has made a significant contribution is the celebration of religious and cultural festivals. We have created dances for events such as Chinese New Year, Caribbean Carnival, Holi, St. Valentine's Day, Hannukah and also enjoyed dancing around the maypole on May Day. This year we are celebrating the British Saints' days so for St. Andrew's Day in November, we had an afternoon of Scottish dancing complete with costumes including tartan sashes, and a smoke machine to add the effect of Scottish mist!

Beyond school we have performed special Christmas dances in Worcester Cathedral in front of an enormous congregation - truly memorable events! In addition, we were invited to take part in the Worcester school's Dance Festival alongside pupils from mainstream. Last year as a result of our performance at the 1998 Festival we were selected to perform at the Worcester School's Dance Showcase an evening event held at the Swan Theatre in Worcester where some of the best examples of dance in our county are on display. We performed a dance based on the Easter Story using some very exciting music from the show 'Lord of the Dance'. It was a great honour for us and we were very well received by the audience.

As the pupils have to be pushed in their chairs by the adults who actually learn the dances one might question what the children are getting from wheelchair dancing? However, everyone who has seen our dancing comments on the pupils' faces and the enjoyment they are getting from the activity. Just as we enjoy moving our bodies at different speeds and in different directions when dancing to music so the children love these experiences too, albeit in their

The photographs below show some of the Sunfield students at work with Peppy.



Two students work with one of Sunfield's permanent staff to form body sculptures.



Photographs by Roy Peters

We make different shapes using a loop of elastic.



This student finds eye-contact a challenge, but dance seems to create a link between us.

Wheelchair Dancing for Students with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties - Experiences in a special school in Surrey

" I kind of think of my chair when I'm dancing kind of like ice skaters think of their skates.
It's an accessory for me to use.... to glide and to do beautiful spins and so for me it's a
beautiful tool to interpret dance."

Alana Yvonne Smith, Wheelchair dancer. (CNN Chicago 1997)

It is only possible to make the assumption that the enjoyment and experiences of students with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (P.M.L.D.) are similar to that described by Alana Yvonne Smith. This assumption can be supported by the obvious delight shown on the faces of our students when taking part in Scottish Country dancing, Line dancing or Disco dancing.

Our group is quite typical of pupils with P.M.L.D in comparative schools across the country. Most have little independent use of their legs or their arms and hands. All have severe communication impairment. All are wheelchair users and some of these chairs are large, unwieldy and heavy. These students spend much of their life in a static position, either in their wheelchair, laying on a physiotherapy wedge or side layer or standing in a standing frame. There is very little opportunity for the students to move around in a random manner, or to experience a change of direction or a rush of speed. It is possible for younger students with P.M.L.D to experience a variety of movements. They can be taken out of their wheelchairs and experience activities in, for example, the soft play area or engage in physical "rough and tumble" play with a member of school staff or a parent. With the larger wheelchair dependant students this is no longer possible.

It is possible to compensate for this with activities like wheelchair dancing, which gives the students an opportunity to experience a variety of movements as well as a change of direction and speed. Therefore, allowing the students their entitlement to activity, fun, achievement/ progression, recognition and self worth. The students can gain the opportunity to communicate, anticipate, and also experience and enjoy a variety of styles of music. They can also work as part of a group in contrast to their largely individual work on a one to one basis with their carer or support worker. There is an opportunity to integrate with other students from within the school. Equally as important, an opportunity to perform either as a group or as part of a larger group on an equal basis with more physically able students or adults.

The main emphasis of this activity is on the wheelchair, not the person who is pushing it. The wheelchair pusher becoming part of the wheelchair, the dance being observed as a whole and the dancers are part of the whole.

Our first experiments took the form of Scottish country dancing. Despite none of the staff knowing any Scottish country dancing, we were able with the help of a publication of "Scottish Country Dances in Diagrams," to choreograph a selection of six dances. This included a version of the "Gay Gordons" and "The Dashing White Sergeant". We found that many traditional movements could be adapted for wheelchairs, such as promenade, figure of eight, reels and passing under an arch. As the pushers became more confident the dances became more ambitious, more complicated and, most important for the students, a lot faster. The students were encouraged to clap while others were performing their particular part of the dance. The dances

were performed in groups of four, six or eight wheelchair duos, depending on the number of available pushers. It is possible to adapt dances according to numbers. Later instruments were introduced for the students to either hold and play on their own or for them to experience the vibration of the instrument on their chair or a part of their body.

The second style of wheelchair dance we attempted was disco dancing. This activity is felt to be appropriate for the age of our adolescent students. This undoubtedly proved more energetic for the pushers. The routines themselves were more arbitrary than the set Scottish dancing routines. The lessons did follow a fairly set plan and the dances were set to the same music and followed similar routines. We started with a "warm up" routine performed to the same music each week. This took the form of a gentle activity, moving freely around the hall, greeting each other in ways appropriate to the individual abilities. As there is rarely one wheelchair pusher to each wheelchair the pushers would swop wheelchairs leaving a student static. This student would wait and be greeted in turn by the other students until another wheelchair pusher became available. After the introductory warm up, a circle was formed in the centre of the hall. The dance then became more structured, with one pusher leading by calling out directions. Routines then included forming the wheelchair into a circle, moving around in a circle, then into the centre and out. We then became more adventurous, carrying out similar movements using only the back wheels of the wheelchairs, hence giving the students a very different perspective. Another manoeuvre would be to form a circle, two wheelchairs would cross over in the middle of the circle and change places, this action then increased in speed. We found we could push the students to another adult, "free wheeling," the students showed obvious pleasure at this activity. It became evident that the faster the students moved the more they enjoyed the activity. Another movement can only be described as a "motor bike cross over," similar to the gymnastic displays, crossing the hall diagonally. It was then we experienced the first negative reaction from the students. When the student was "sat out" for a short while to enable another student to have a turn, some students became rather distressed until they joined in again. The session would finish with a slow free dance when, the music used was slower and the movements flowed with the music.

Our next variation was Line dancing. Line dancing, though very effective was the most difficult form of dancing to choreograph. In line dancing there are complicated foot movements, which do not lend themselves to wheelchair movements. We found that a similar effect can be achieved by using synchronised movements. The sessions always started with the students positioned in their wheelchairs in two lines facing each other. Most movements are carried out in a line either one side at a time or both sides simultaneously. Typical movements for this style would be, one line travelling forwards to meet the opposite line, then returning to their original position either collecting the opposite partner or on their own, to be repeated by the other line. Also "Free wheeling" across to opposite positions or diagonally crossing over, figures of eight, as well as weaving either around static wheelchairs or two sets weaving in opposite directions.

We gave a dancing demonstration at the School Summer fair. A line dance team was also performing, the two dance teams performed simultaneously, showing that wheelchair users can perform on an equal basis to able-bodied people.

Having suitable music for the session is very important. Not only should the music fit in with the style of the dance and the movement but more importantly music that the students enjoy. We noticed on many occasions the students showed a preference for a particular piece of music. The

same music is used on a regular basis to enable the students to become familiar with it and encourage anticipation. It has been recorded on many occasions when a student had been sitting quietly, until, when hearing the music he/she smiled immediately and became excited and eager to take part in the session. Music plays a major part in many of the student's activities, communicating much more than word could ever do.

Set routines are built into all the sessions. The activity starts when all students have felt their wheelchairs "twirl" and heard the music as a cue for the lesson to begin.

"Familiarity with routines and sequences of events which form a regular part of an activity can also invest the sensory experience with meaning as they become signals and cues for what is going to happen. The meaning is derived from the structure of the activity."

(Ouvry, C. and Saunders, S. *Enabling Access* 1996. p. 209)

The development of communication during these sessions is encouraged. This ranges from the obvious communication opportunities such as the greeting session at the start of the Disco dance lesson, to encouraging eye contact during any face to face activities in the dance. Anticipation is encouraged and the students are given opportunities to make choices where possible. These may range from which instrument the student would like to play as an accompaniment, to whether the student would like to be pushed or turned quickly again.

There are many difficulties in running these sessions, one being having enough members of staff to push students in their wheelchairs. These sessions by their very nature are strenuous for the pushers and recruiting volunteers for such work is not easy. Another difficulty is having enough space with a smooth enough surface on which to carry out the dances.

In conclusion wheelchair dancing for students with P.M.L.D, offers a great deal of scope for further development. It has become evident that it is important for the students to be able to experience speed and changes of direction in ways they do not usually experience. The students have indicated their pleasure in this activity through their facial expressions and their body language.

It is also evident that people in wheelchairs can enjoy a range of activities and that nothing should be ruled out, anything is possible. It is important that the students with P.M.L.D. are given the opportunity to "glide and to do beautiful spins" and to use their wheelchair as "a beautiful tool to interpret dance" as described by Alana Yvonne Smith. There is nothing more rewarding than seeing an otherwise passive student smiling with obvious enjoyment at the activity they are participating in.

For further information please contact:-

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References

Ashdown, R. Bovair, K. Carpenter, B. (1996) *Enabling Access. Effective Teaching and learning for pupils with learning Difficulties*. David Fulton Publishers Ltd.

Pilling, F. (1980) *Scottish Country Dances in Diagrams*. F. L. Pilling's

Wheelchair Dancing, Chicago 5.15 97. CNN Chicago: Recent Stories: interactiveCNN.com

BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS *the advantages of services working together*

Introduction

There are a number of different types of provision for people with multiple disabilities. Historically, these services have tended to work in isolation. As a consequence, positive developments may not be followed up in all areas of an individual's life. Recognising this problem, we have made efforts in recent years to form stronger links with other provisions involved in the lives of our students.

Music courses have been available at Orchard Hill College of Further Education as we have recognised the value of using music for a long time. Opportunities to participate in and create music either with an instrument or vocally can develop skills in many areas including awareness of the environment, speech and other forms of expression, social skills such as listening, turn-taking and respecting the needs of others.

'Live' music in which our students are active participants has been an important part of the curriculum for the past ten years. We share a building with a thriving Music Therapy Department and we have had many opportunities to work alongside them in recent years.

As a teacher working in the field of Communication Development I have been fortunate to work on a number of joint ventures with music therapists, initially at Orchard Hill College of Further Education and more recently in the homes of a group of students.

Tracy's Story

Tracy is 35 years old and has lived in institutions for most of her life. She has attended Orchard Hill College on a fairly regular basis since 1989. Tracy has no verbal language and a limited understanding of vocabulary but has always shown an awareness and interest in those around her. Tracy dislikes touch contact and has shown a reluctance to participate actively in group work. She has been prepared to sit in quite close proximity to others for periods of up to ten minutes after which she will usually choose to remove herself from the group.

It has long been recognised that Tracy has a real passion for music. Although refusing to handle a musical instrument for more than a few seconds she is able to pick up a song and hum it pitch perfect and she often amuses herself by humming a song and dancing.

During courses at Orchard Hill College of Tracy has largely focused on developing her acceptance of working within a group and her tolerance of touch.

A short course was set up at Tracy's home involving ourselves and music therapy. With her love of music, it was clear from the start of this new course that Tracy was interested in what we were doing. For the first half of the

twelve week course she was prepared to sit with the group for 45 to 60 minutes without getting up. Although quite passive in instrumental activities she actively involved herself through her observation, body movement and singing.

Throughout the course we tempted Tracy with a variety of instruments all of which she either refused to touch or briefly played, until one morning towards the end of the course she was offered the xylophone and a beater. At first Tracy appeared to show little interest, however, within a few minutes she had picked the beater up. The music therapist, Rosie, was quickly able to respond musically with her keyboard to Tracy's playing. Tracy soon showed a recognition that Rosie and others in the group were responding to her musical explorations and she continued to play for over half an hour, showing a strong awareness of the rest of the group and of her own contribution to the music!

By using the medium of music and a combination of teaching and therapy skills we were able to reach Tracy in a way that had not been achieved before. Not only was she prepared to accept close proximity to others for a much longer period of time, but she was also prepared to participate actively in a way that neither myself or Rosie had experienced.

After the course had finished the Music Therapy department went on to provide a further course in Tracy's home and Tracy attended a Communication Development course at Orchard Hill College in which she continued to make excellent progress in accepting close contact and increasingly in her willingness to initiate contact with both fellow students and staff, by reaching out and touching them.

Different Perspectives and Approaches - a brief summary

Orchard Hill College of Further Education provides a wide range of quality educational courses designed to meet the individual needs of adults with profound and multiple\severe learning disabilities. The College operates within a structure that is lead by the educational needs of individual students. Teaching involves knowledge of a range of communication systems and teaching approaches. In every course students work towards specific learning objectives and on foundation skills in: relationships; tolerance; awareness of self and others; fine motor skills; choice and decision making; and purposeful movement.

The Music Therapy Department at Orchard Hill is a specialist clinical resource providing individual and group sessions for people with a range of learning disabilities, emotional disturbance and physical and sensory impairment. Many of their goals are similar to those of Orchard Hill College of Further Education. However, music therapists work from a different viewpoint, with a different emphasis. Whilst teaching at Orchard Hill College is lead by the *educational needs* of the individual the primary focus for the Music Therapy Department is on *emotional development* of the individual. This is achieved by building a therapeutic relationship through creation of specially improvised music, characterising an individual's mood and feelings, between the therapist and the client.

Conclusion

Different services tend to work in isolation so there are issues that need to be addressed when embarking on a joint project for the very first time. There needs to be a recognition that different services may approach things from a different perspective and that they will work in different ways.

Once these differences have been recognised one can then go on to establish shared goals and a way of working together that combines the skills and teaching methods of both disciplines for the benefit of the students.

We have found that there are many positive results to be obtained by breaking down the barriers. Staff are able to share skills, experience and knowledge and so develop good practice. As a result our students are able to receive a more cohesive and higher quality of service.

The music therapists involved with this joint work report that "the collaboration with Further Education teaching staff has brought new ways of working and planning, and a remarkable way of seeing clients in a different light, through each others' eyes".

John Noble

If you would like more information about the work of Orchard Hill College of Further Education our address is: Orchard Hill College of Further Education, 6 Elm Avenue, Orchard Hill, Fountain Drive, Carshalton, Surrey SM45 4NR
Telephone: 0181 8770 8125 Fax: 0181 642 3763

For more information about Music Therapy you can write to Rosanne Tyas at Music Therapy Department at the same address, or telephone: 0181 770 8219

Professional designer studying for an MA in Design Research for Disability at London Guildhall University seeks information on two topics: **Age appropriateness** and **brick play**. Thoughts, opinions, debate, relevant literature, personal experiences are all needed.

The information will be used to help prepare a dissertation and practical design project in the area of brick kplay for those with learning disabilities.

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THE LANGUAGE OF MOVEMENT

JABADAO promotes understanding of the importance of movement in the lives of all human beings. It is a National Development Agency undertaking a wide range of training and research projects with Health Authorities, Social Service Departments and Community Groups all over the country, working in early years education, with young people, with very elderly people and with people who have dementia, as well as with people who have PMLD.

The seeds of the company were sown fifteen years ago when a dancer and a dance therapist, feeling very uncertain and unskilled set up a year long project in Leeds exploring the contribution dancers might make within settings for people with PMLD. As the dancer on that project I had to rethink everything I had understood about dance and movement to date. I was used to "making movement happen", "being in charge" and "shaping the movements people made". Here, I was working with people who had little or no voluntary movement and for whom verbal instructions or suggestions were irrelevant. At the outset I was intimidated, but the project turned out to be the springboard for all that would happen afterwards, including the setting up of JABADAO, many projects, training courses and a Diploma. It was the people in that project who became our teachers.

The most important thing we learned, that we now pass on to others, is how to use movement to BE WITH each other rather than DO WITH or DO TO. This represents a dramatic shift in goals. We stopped trying to make movement happen and started to see what movement was already there. We began to understand the shared language we had, even though there were vast differences in our bodies and in our physical capacities. Here was a language that didn't need words, or intellectual sorting and sifting to make it useful; a language that leant more heavily on feelings, intuition and empathy than it did on intellectual capacity. Through movement language we could get to know each other and spend constructive time together.

Sometimes the movement we worked with was as tiny as a breathing pattern, or a minute shift or change in hand position; sometimes it was an involuntary shaking or rocking. The movements that we had previously either not noticed, or dismissed as irrelevant or unhelpful, became the stuff of our movement conversations, the focus for our being together. Even when we began to realise that these were our starting points, we still spent a considerable time trying to do something with them, to build, to change, to *improve*. We continued to feel that we must teach, or lead, or control.

There are many goals that can be addressed in movement, and we still keep these in mind. For instance, finding ways of keeping stiff and immobile bodies gently moving, making movement and physicality a pleasure rather than purely functional or positively uncomfortable; using movement to build and develop communication.. These are good aims and sometimes we really feel we inch nearer to them. But as goals they are in the back of our minds, rather than at the front. We believe that the best contribution we can make is to use movement as the focus for simply *being together*.

The Language of Movement

We call the work we have developed The JABADAO Approach; it offers a way of seeing how much goes on in movement and ways of letting ourselves experience it. Our primary focus is on using movement and awareness of bodily-felt experience, to build relationships. If what happens as a result fits snugly with educational or therapeutic goals, that's great. Simply spending focused time together - listening, responding, enjoying through movement - is a goal in itself.

Using the language of movement requires two things:

- a) the ability to 'listen' to the movements of others and
- b) comfort with moving ourselves.

On JABADAO courses we introduce two ways of listening in movement: one is through what we see and the other is through what we feel - our kinesthetic sense, or sense of movement.

Belinda came on a JABADAO course because she thought it might be relevant and helpful but she was fairly anxious about movement and about touch. After some initial activities, course members were divided into pairs and invited to sit alongside one another, with eyes shut, and with the palms of their hands together. With some haunting music in the background they were invited simply to move their hands as little or as much as they wished - they could keep completely still if they wished - and to see how much they noticed about the feelings, sensations and movements in their hands or bodies as they did this. It took a little while to settle in, to get comfortable; there were plenty of nervous chuckles, wry comments and shuffles. After a few minutes the room fell silent as each couple 'sank into' the activity. They stopped using words and stopped thinking out what they were doing in the same way. Instead, they began to notice many other things about their own experience. To an outsider, the movements they did with their hands and arms looked less directed, less worked-out, often more repetitive - in fact, many of the couples, including Belinda and her partner, rocked backwards and forwards in the same pattern over and over again.

Afterwards, they spoke first to each other, and then to the group about what they had thought, or felt during the moving time. Belinda was surprised about how she felt. She described a 'drifting' feeling accompanying the rocking, laughing as she reflected that she must have looked like her son when he rocks sometimes. She said she could have gone on rocking for ages (!) and hadn't wanted to stop the exercise. She commented on the warmth of her partner's hands and the comforting quality of having them there. She also said that her arms ached and she had to rest them on her knees, at which point she and her partner had simply sat with their hands together, feeling the tiniest involuntary movements that occurred, that seemed huge at the time. Belinda summed up her thoughts by saying that she had had no idea how much could be communicated through movement, or how nice it would be to drift and float supported only by the music and the tiny movements.

There were also people in Belinda's course group who were not deeply moved by the work. This isn't for everyone, nor do we imagine it ever will be. It is something to try if you are drawn to it; if you like to communicate through your physicality, or think you might, this has much to offer. We must all find the way that suits us - this is one among many.

It is Lizzie's bedtime and this is a bedtime story. Tonight, Lizzie's mum - Janis - climbs onto the bed and lies down close beside her. She has a familiar tape of sleepy music on the cassette recorder. Nestled in, Janis shuts her eyes and focuses on the feelings in her own body, and then, takes her attention to the tiny movements that she can feel through her side where she is touching her daughter. She spends some time tuning in ... noticing more and more about the smallest jerks or twitches and Lizzie's breathing pattern. She brings her own in line so that they are breathing together, their bellies rising and falling together, their arms pressing slightly together as their chests fill with air, then parting slightly as

they breathe out. Tonight, Janis notices the twitches in Lizzie's arm and is prompted to press back, finding a rhythm that they can share between them. Tomorrow she may focus on a jiggling foot; the next day she may choose to sit behind Lizzie, cradling her in her lap and patting hands together lightly. Sometimes she may choose to sing, hum and croon an accompaniment to their movements. Each night she will take her cues from Lizzie by listening through her body (her kinesthetic sense) and each night she will respond through her own body - not in order to 'get it right' but in order to share some focused time together.

Some nights Janis feels delighted by what occurs between them; some nights she may feel that there has been little conversation, only that she has focused in a particular way and offered a possibility. Some nights it may feel like a complete irrelevance and she may choose to do something else instead. Mostly, this bedtime story told in movement is an important part of their day, a different way of doing a familiar thing.

Janis listens, and responds through movement. She 'speaks' the things that are prompted in her by the movements that Lizzie does. It is central to this approach that she uses her body as the 'tool'. This is not about offering a movement experience to Lizzie (rolling her gently on a physio ball or swinging her in a parachute - although these are lovely things to do as well). This is about sharing a movement experience through attunement and responding through our own bodies. It can be deeply moving, very intimate and, consequently, very hard to do. Sometimes we know that we have to keep it deliberately light, and sometimes we just can't do it. We know from parents that sometimes they say that it is just too affecting and they choose to do something altogether different. Other times it can be deeply frustrating, when neither of you can settle and nothing seems to happen.

We are not suggesting that people with profound and multiple disabilities always have the same degree of physical awareness and fine tuning as a carer or parent; nor can we assume that our experience as we move together is the same as that of a person with a profound disability. However, experience of using movement with many different people and groups over the years leads us to believe that the quality of this focus, coupled with the reliance on movement rather than words, can offer a positive, and often pleasing, way of being together, even if our experiences are very different. It is another useful thing to tuck into the vast array of skills and tactics that you need when caring for, and living with people who have PMLD. It can also be a way of recharging your own batteries, time for you as much as time for the person you are moving with.

Movement is a language that we all use anyway. JABADAO helps you to take a new look at it, and to brush up on your skills so that you can use it more effectively.

Linda Neary

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Sherborne Developmental Movement : an overview

Cyndi Hill

'... there is no element of competition in the movement experiences...; everyone is successful in some way and everyone is praised and encouraged to pursue further effort.' (Sherborne. 1990 p 111)

Sherborne Developmental Movement (SDM) is the culmination of the life time work of Veronica Sherborne, which spanned a period of approximately 30 years, through the 1960's, '70's and 80's, until her death in 1990. She devised and developed a method of working with children with severe learning difficulties through shared movement experiences. As her work evolved, however, the application of her ideas was extended to meet the needs of both children and adults with many varying special needs.

Veronica Sherborne spent her professional life working with children and adults in a variety of situations and with their teachers, care workers and therapists. She trained as a teacher in physical education, in physiotherapy and latterly was taught by Rudolf Laban at his Art of Movement Studio in Manchester, as well as bringing up three children of her own.

Following her period of study with Rudolf Laban she worked at the studio as an assistant to Laban. The theory underlying SDM was always acknowledged by Sherborne as being based on Rudolf Laban's analysis of human movement, through which his aim was:-

'not so much to make successful performers as to develop the personality, to develop potential, and to help people to understand and experience the widest range of movement possible' (Sherborne 1990 p v)

In the introduction to her book, published in 1990 shortly before her death, Sherborne states her conclusion that :

'all children have two basic needs: they need to feel at home in their own bodies and so to gain body mastery, and they need to be able to form good relationships' (Sherborne 1990 p v)

The basic principles and theoretical background to SDM

Drawing on Sherborne's conclusion there are two basic objectives to SDM.

Awareness of self and awareness of others.

In terms of 'awareness of self' there are three basic questions which need to be asked.

- *What part of the body is moving?*
- *Where is it moving?*
- *How is it moving?* (Sherborne 1990 p55)

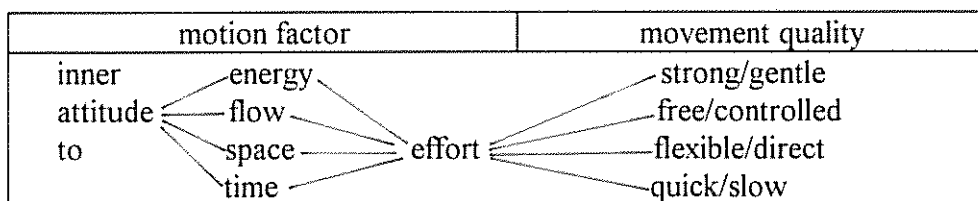
Activities which focus on **specific parts of the body**; emphasised by appropriate language and identification; such as sliding on hips , patting knees or curling up around the centre of our bodies, help towards the development of self image in terms of an awareness of basic body parts. Shaking hands, slapping feet on the floor, tickling knees, all accompanied by supporting language input focusses attention on these various parts of the body and how they work in relation to each other.

An **awareness of space** in all it's dimensions, gives us the confidence to move around, enjoy freedom of movement, and to experiment with different ways of moving. Aspects of space which are explored through SDM are personal space, spatial concepts and how we move through space. Our 'personal' space ,in SDM terms, is

defined by the limits of our reach in all directions from any one point. It includes space 'infront, behind, to the side, high space and low space'. We can also think about how we move through space generally and the varying directions in which we can travel, - forwards, backwards, sideways. Combining body awareness and spatial awareness we can think about how we can use different parts of our body in many different ways in order to move through space.

Sherborne considered **how the body is moving** to be one of the most important aspects of her work, and to consider this she used Laban's movement analysis, drawing on what Laban referred to as 'movement qualities' as the tool for '**observation**'.

Very simply, Laban's analysis says that at any given time we have an inner attitude to energy, flow, space and time (aspects of movement which he referred to as *motion factors*). This inner attitude results in '*effort*', which in turn influences the type of movements we make, which Laban called *movement qualities*.



An awareness of movement qualities greatly extends our movement vocabulary thus offering us the means to explore varying ways of moving and opens up greater possibilities for creativity. To develop this awareness we need to experience the extremes eg we need to contrast strong movements with gentle ones, quick movements with slow ones etc..

Also, by '**observing**' how people move group leaders can identify needs in terms of a basic movement vocabulary and very importantly, in terms of self esteem, confidence and social or emotional stability and respond accordingly in the movement sessions.

These activities, focussing on various parts of the body, spatial aspects and the work on 'movement qualities' work towards meeting the first of Sherborne,s conclusions that children need to '*feel at home in their own bodies*'.

In order to meet her second conclusion, that children '*need to be able to form relationships*', she devised three broad types of relationship. In SDM terms these shared movement experiences activities fall into three basic categories which she called '*caring or with*' relationships, '*shared*' relationships and '*against*' relationships (Sherborne 1990 p5)

There are certain aspects which distinguish these three types of relationship activities In a *caring or with* relationship there are two distinct roles; one of the partners is being 'cared for', 'looked after' by the other, as in 'giving a partner a slide' or 'cradling' The caring person is responsible for the well being of his/her partner.

'This calls for sensitivity from the responsible person towards the needs and feelings of the person being looked after, and a feeling of trust from the person being cared for'

(T N & G Sh. Fdn. p9)

'*Shared*' relationships require an equal commitment from both partners. This may take the form of both partners being equally involved in the activity as in 'balance, or 'rowing' activities.

' This requires trust and understanding and an awareness of working together'

(T N & G Sh. Fdn. p9)

'Against' relationships allows both partners to test their own strength, to '*focus and canalise energy and to develop determination*' (Sherborne 1990 p 29) but in such a way that there is NO aggression. Sherborne states quite categorically that in these activities in which one partner uses energy to de-stabilise the other '*It is essential that against relationships are humorous and are treated as play*' (p29)

During all SDM sessions it is essential to encourage group participants to concentrate on the experiences and try to analyse whenever possible what is happening to their bodies and how they feel about it. Sherborne referred to this as '*listening to the body*'. (The activities outlined here have been referred to in very general terms. Sherborne describes many of the movements in much more detail in her book 'Developmental Movement for Children' and a further comprehensive list can be found in the Sherborne Foundation publication - 'Teaching Notes and Guidelines')

Although there is a basic repertoire of movements which forms the basis of SDM sessions these activities are only the vehicle by which the fundamental quality and richness of Sherborne's work is implemented. The adage '*It's not what you do, it's the way that you do it*' - is nowhere more applicable! It is the underlying **basic philosophy** which underpins the implementation of SDM which makes it so much more than just a series of exercises.

'The activities are referred to...as 'experiences' rather than 'exercises' because they combine both physical and psychological learning experiences'
(Sherborne 1990 p vi)

There are some **key words** which outline this basic philosophy.

SDM:-

- encourages participants always to be SENSITIVE towards and aware of the NEEDS of others.
- is based on SUCCESS- because there is no right or wrong way of doing the activities - everyone's effort is applauded- everyone is 'successful' at their own level. As a result of this aSDM session is a POSITIVE EXPERIENCE.
- sessions are PERSON CENTRED- they are not prescriptive- ideas are taken from the group and shared and developed, therefore there is a need for FLEXIBILITY on the part of the session leader.
- sessions are a SHARED EXPERIENCE- everyone in the group is equally valued, wherever possible less able or young participants are encouraged to take responsibility for - to look after - their partners.
- at all times is working towards the development of TRUST and CONFIDENCE in SELF and OTHERS and the development of a positive SELF IMAGE and SELF ESTEEM.
- encourages participants to explore the notion of CREATIVITY - Can you think of a way of...? and then building on those ideas with the rest of the group.
- should always be ENJOYABLE and FUN!

SDM sessions are led, wherever possible, from the same level at which the participants are working, eg. if the activity is floor based then the group leader is also working at floor level. This generally enriches the concept of the session being a 'shared experience' for everyone.

The application of SDM with particular reference to children and adults with profound and multiple learning difficulties

Although SDM is now being used in many different ways, by psychologists, therapists, care workers, social workers and as a team building activity it's main use still remains in the field of special education, particularly with children with severe learning difficulties (sld) and increasingly with children with profound and multiple learning difficulties (pml).

Where it is used in schools it usually appears as part of the PE curriculum, but this belies the true value of the work. Given the points discussed previously concerning the underpinning philosophical aspects it is apparent that SDM can make a very positive contribution towards the personal development and confidence of those taking part in the activities. It can also support the development of language and communication and enhance positive social and emotional interaction. It can through these many and varied facets be viewed as a cross-curricular activity, making a very meaningful contribution to many aspects of the over-all curriculum .

Experiencing the activities for themselves; -essential ,in Sherborne's view- people proposing to use SDM in their work- especially with children and adults with pml, may well, on first impressions, feel that the activities are totally inappropriate for the folks with whom they are working. However, if we go back to the concept of Sherborne's '*experiences*' rather than exercises, we can ask ourselves for example 'How can I give this person the experience of being big or being very small,- how can this person have the experience of free-flow swinging or sliding,- is it possible ,given physical support to give this person the experience of resisting the energy of someone pushing or pulling against him/her? There are positive answers to all of these questions. Within the limits of his/her movements it is possible for the helper, to sit behind the less able person, hold their hands and, using appropriate language, help that person to stretch their arms as far as possible, and then to fold them in again around their body. However restricted the movement may be the **contrast** is the important factor on which to focus. The experience of free-flow sliding can be given using a blanket or duvet cover, and swinging in a blanket is a really exhilarating experience for someone whose body is normally in a very tight, bound position. An able bodied helper can wrap themselves around their less able partner and hold them in tightly whilst another person tries to unwrap them. Given this sort of broad flexible thinking our folks with pml can *experience* most of the activities in the movement repertoire, and the principles of 'sharing' and acknowledgement of effort apply in exactly the same way as when working with more able and physically independent people. Again many more ideas for working with people with pml can be found in Sherborne's book.

There are however **important issues** which must be addressed if we are to undertake SDM with folks with pml. One is the necessary level of able bodied support, another is the time factor involved in getting folks ready to participate in the session; especially when the latter may well involve the use of lifts and hoists.

The first issue is a major factor, even more so when we are working with young adults. It is just as important to 'look after' the well-being of the supporters who will be moving with and possibly partially taking the weight of heavy people. It may be that it is necessary to have two supporters for each person and this is not often logistically possible. If the group is small, perhaps three or four people, it is possible to 'wait for your turn, as long as you don't have to wait too long and you can see what is going on whilst you are waiting'. In any case, to undertake SDM with grown people with pml calls for a great deal of commitment from the supporters, but if it can be arranged it is

it is well worth the effort given the signs of obvious enjoyment and delight from the participants. When working with younger children with pml d FE students can give excellent and very capable support. (They also work very well with younger children who may need one-to-one partners) Again the benefits of such an arrangement are shared. The students gain a great deal in terms of self esteem and confidence if they are given the responsibility of looking after a younger/less able person.

It is sometimes difficult to decide what to include in a movement session for people with pml d. Sometimes it is helpful to work to a theme such as 'sliding', 'big and small', 'against' or 'fast and slow'. This helps to make the session feel more meaningful by giving it a focus. It can also, if it is required, help to fit the SDM session into other areas of the curriculum.

(N.B. If you have any doubts, before undertaking any physical activity with people with pml d it is wise to consult with the physiotherapist beforehand.)

The work of the Sherborne Foundation

Since the death of Veronica Sherborne in 1990 the Sherborne Foundation has been set up, in her memory. It's fundamental aim is:-

to perpetuate the work of Veronica Sherborne, in the belief that her ideas and way of working can make a positive contribution towards maximising the abilities and quality of life of children, young people and adults, regardless of their needs, - through shared movement experiences.

Invitations to give lectures and to lead workshops and courses overseas involved Veronica Sherborne in a lot of travelling. She presented her work in Norway, Sweden Canada Australia and Poland, and more recently members of the Foundation have also introduced her ideas in Belgium, Finland, Estonia, Portugal, Japan, Germany and Italy. Belgium and Sweden now have their own Sherborne Associations which together with the UK and other overseas members make up the International Sherborne Foundation. The Foundation is a registered charity and has it's own distinctive logo which is quickly becoming recognised world wide. There is also in place an internationally agreed course structure beginning at Level 1 at an introductory level working through to advanced practitioners, culminating in the Course Leaders certificated course.

During her life time Sherborne made six films/videos illustrating her work and a further video has been made recently. Her book, published shortly before she died, is the only full account of her life's work **written by her**, and as such is the most valuable resource available to those wishing to learn about her work. Access to this resource material and information concerning the work of the Sherborne Foundation can be obtained through:-

The Sherborne Foundation. c/o 1 The Vale, Pucklechurch, South Glos. BS16 9NW
Tel./Fax 0117-9374764 e-mail gandchill@aol.com

References

Developmental Movement for Children- Veronica Sherborne- Camb. Univ. Press 1990

Teaching Notes and Guidelines- Sherborne Foundation 1996

Latest videos:-Good Companions Never say never

Writer's note:- *It will be noted that I have written mostly in the third person plural. This has been quite deliberate as the ethos of Sherborne's work is **person/people centred**. That is not to say that the work should not be viewed objectively. It has to be if it is to survive into the future, but that is the role of **objective research**.*

"Beat That!"

communication through music and sound

"Beat That!" has used a simple idea which works really well. We have taken the essential basic ingredients which go to make up music, and have presented them in a style whereby anyone can be creative in a musical way. You do not have to be a trained musician, or have particular musical skills. In fact "Beat That!" especially welcomes those of who have had no musical training, and who feel that they cannot sing in tune, keep a rhythm or play an instrument.

We offer a direct means of communication through music and sound where by people of any age or ability can listen, feel, compose and create music spontaneously, both individually and in a relaxed group atmosphere.

"Beat That!" focuses on the African way of making music, which means that everyone joins in. There is no audience - everyone is a participant. There is no concept or word for "getting it wrong" . Every contribution is valued, and can be creatively used. There is no such thing as being out of tune, or unable to make music.

We create rhythmic sounds by using our hands, African drums (djembes) and resonance boards, which draw the group together and amplify the drumming.

We embody the concept of rhythmic conversations - each rhythm carries a message and there is much being said, in rhythm, at any one time. Once we have learned the language of rhythms and chants, we can use them in our homes, in our work places, for mood changing, dancing and fun!

"Beat That!"

- Clapping and drumming
- Creating silence as a framework to sound
- Call and response
- Chanting
- Imitation
- Turn taking
- Improvisation

We start with listening to isolated sounds. We encourage pre-verbal vocalisations which may be imitations of the individual's response. Just like the first sounds an infant hears, the heartbeat of the mother, so "Beat That!" is return to the very basic of beats - the heartbeat of rhythm. Some sounds are orderly and predictable while others are random and chaotic. Everything else grows from this awareness.

Bobbie Stormont and Hilary Wainer, co-creators of TACPAC, (see page xxx), have both worked for many years in education and music with children and young people with learning difficulties. Bobbie and Hilary run "Beat That!" The work has grown out of a need to involve all staff with music making in the schools where Bobbie and Hilary work. They have set about creating workshops to share this method of music making with their colleagues, pupils, and all staff members of schools where there are children who have learning difficulties.

"Beat That !" runs tailor made workshops to suit your specific needs. For example, they ran an all day INSET training with the staff of New Fosseyway School in Bristol. The day contained material which could easily be remembered and learned. The staff had great fun composing and being creative with the musical ingredients offered to them.

Here are a few comments from the members of the staff of New Fosseyway School:

"Excellent - we could so do with a week of this! "

"Music that is really for ALL"

"More please!"

Should readers wish to enquire about experiencing the one day INSET course at New Fosseyway School, they are welcome to call Val Davis, who would be happy to tell you more about their Inset day, and how the school and staff benefited from the training.

Telephone: 01275 839411

"Beat That!" also runs ONSITE INSET for school staff who wish to have training in their classrooms with their pupils. Bobbie and Hilary attend sessions run by staff, and assist them. Together, staff and trainers work out the best possible method of adapting this creative session to fit the many different needs of the pupils in the class.



ON- SITE INSET

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double sided -
please print
both sides*

Following a whole school staff training day, at the beginning of 1998 "Beat That!" ran a 12 week pilot study at Springfield School, Vauxhall. The aim was to enable the staff with the "Beat That!" trainers to apply what they learned on the training day to their specific classroom settings.

The format:

Six classes were trained over a period of 12 weeks with trainers present every alternate week. This gave staff two weeks to learn, experiment and develop work covered during their previous training session.

Staff were supplied with a course handbook. Contents of the handbook were:

- links with the National Curriculum
- session plans
- sections for weekly evaluation for staff and pupils
- sections for weekly planning

Diversity:

Out of the 40 members of staff there were a range of people, some of whom felt confident with spontaneous music making and others for whom this seemed a huge challenge. The pilot study included twenty such members of staff. The children and young people involved ranged in age from 2 to 18 years and had a wide range of severe and complex learning difficulties.

Development:

For the first 3 weeks the trainers directed sessions with the help and advice of staff ensuring sessions were tailor made. For the following 3 weeks the trainers handed over session leadership to all staff and continued to introduce new material and ideas where appropriate. During the training, staff gained enough confidence to lead sessions, creating their own material for their specific needs.

During the 6 weeks of training all the pupils began to participate in the sessions in a variety of ways and responded to the main elements of the "Beat That!" work i.e.

- the presence and absence of sound
- loud and soft fast and slow high and low rhythm
- call and response
- listening
- voice and body sounds
- repetition
- form and structure
- hearing their own names, vocalisations, sounds and words in a musical and rhythmical structure

COMPOSING WITH PUPILS WITH PMLD

When I work with teachers on music workshops and in schools, they are often at a loss when thinking of ways to involve pupils with PMLD in composing. The National Curriculum Orders for Music refer to improvising and organising sounds in ever more complicated structures which, at first sight, seem out of the reach of pupils who have complex disabilities, one of which is profound intellectual impairment. There appear to be lots of decisions for a composer to make as well as physical manipulation of instruments to make the music come to life. I certainly do not underestimate the difficulties that teachers and pupils face, but I would like to share some of the ideas I have which are based on experience which spans nearly thirty years in special education. I would just like to add that I am no music specialist, just an enthusiastic amateur whose love of music is enormous. All the ideas I come up with in this short article should be accessible to non-specialists and I do not assume any prior musical ability, though perhaps basic knowledge based on current practice in schools.

Firstly, it would be helpful just to consider what might be the essence of composing in music. This can be helpful when trying to figure out how pupils with PMLD can be involved. Music is about sounds and patterns of sound and composing is about putting these sounds together into patterns which may (or may not) be different from the way in which other people have put them together. Composers usually have some way in which to record their music, either onto paper or computer or directly onto a tape recorder. Usually the composed piece can be played again and again but sometimes, as in improvisation, music is composed on the spot and is gone, never to be played in quite the same way again. According to the National Curriculum improvisation is an important aspect of composing and this might be a good way into composing for pupils with PMLD. Strictly improvisation is a skill which uses previous musical knowledge to enable the performer/composer to experiment freely with notes and rhythms within a piece but the element of freedom with sounds can be useful in the context of pupils with PMLD.

Example

Choose a set of notes on a tuned instrument such as a xylophone or chime bars which are pleasing to the traditional ear. Try the pentatonic scale (CDEGA) or notes of a chord such as CEG or DFA or if you are feeling more adventurous (and have the notes) try the whole tone scale (CDEF^{*}G^{*}Bb). Encourage experimentation with the sounds in an improvisation. If possible always use two beaters but that may be impossible for some pupils with PMLD. Record the piece on a tape recorder and play it back to 'the composer'. Talk about using the sounds made and encourage more improvisation.

You could try to encourage experimentation if this becomes a partnership enterprise either with you or with a more able peer. Practice copying each other and having a conversation on the instrument. Remember that improvisation is usually not repeated so compositions can be as wild as the pupil/s like.

Improvisation does not have to be with tuned instruments. Setting up a small bank of unpitched percussion in front of the composer can encourage experimentation with a variety of sounds. There are many very interesting instruments around at the moment.

Example

Choose three or four instruments which have very different timbre (quality of sound), such as a drum, a woodblock and a gong. These all require hitting but yet produce very different sounds. Set these up with the composer with two beaters) so each can be reached easily. Encourage improvisation as in the previous example.

It is important that instruments offered to young composers are of very good quality. It is a false economy to penny-pinch on instruments. It is better to buy a few very good and interesting instruments than lots of inferior ones 'so that everyone can have something'. Pupils will be drawn to the sounds if they are exciting to listen to. Choose one orchestral sized cymbal on a strap rather than several small pairs and large drum with real skin (or very good plastic) with a

variety of beaters (from soft to hard) and a big bass xylophone (also with a variety of beaters rather than lots of little toy ones. Go for the expensive Latin-American and African percussion so that the sound is actually worth listening to. Test out whether you can actually 'feel' the sound as well as hear it. Some pupils with PMLD are not very good at using their ears and need help to appreciate the sounds they are composing.

So far I have talked about improvisation for pupils who can use their hands (even if they need help) to use beaters and I have only talked about school percussion. Electronic music is very useful for those who find conventional instruments difficult or impossible to handle. Soundbeam, for example, can capitalise on any movement that a pupil can make, however tiny. This is a beam of light which when broken will activate a sound (or visual effect) which can be an electronic keyboard or synthesiser with an amazing number of different kinds of sounds.

Example

Set up the Soundbeam with a variety of different sounds in different places to encourage as much movement as possible. If the pupil needs social encouragement to compose, then turn-taking with a more able person can help the artistic mood. Again if the improvisation is tape recorded, it can be commented on, thereby helping the composer to recognise what s/he has been doing.

Switches attached to samplers or a communication aid that can accept recorded messages can also be effective for composing.

Example

Record three or four different sounds or phrases onto a communication aid and encourage selection to 'compose' an original piece. It is also possible for a profoundly physically disabled pupil to compose vicariously, by which I mean, a physically able person can make the sounds that have been chosen by the pupil with PMLD. This is, perhaps, less spontaneous than improvisation is usually, but can be helpful with some pupils.

Example

Set out a variety of instruments, known to be liked by the composer. Encourage choice of a small number for the improvisation (probably two or three). Then follow any indications for order of playing. Rehearse first and then announce the performance, remembering that this is an improvisation and does not have to be the same each time. Tape record the result and play back, perhaps pointing to the instruments as they are played on the recording.

Some pupils with PMLD may be able to manage the intellectual challenge of composing slightly more formal pieces. Any of the examples so far could be moved a step further by composing short phrases that can be repeated and even handed over to others to perform. Often it is helpful to put this kind of composing into a story or game that provides plenty of opportunities for repeats and developing routines.

Example

Use the story of 'Rosie's Walk' by Pat Hutchins and compose music to represent Rosie and the fox walking through the farmyard. Each time the characters appear, their music can be played. This can be improvised each time, using the same instrument or can be more formally a repeatable phrase. Any instruments can be used as long as they are contrasting in timbre or volume, one set for Rosie and the other for the fox. A third piece of music can be written for the disaster that befalls the fox every time he tries to catch Rosie. This might be a crash on the cymbal or the vibraslap. The composer can choose the sound s/he wants. The piece can be first rehearsed until the performers are happy and then, after a suitable hush to create the right atmosphere, the work can be performed.

It is good to get musicians into the habit of rehearsing first and then performing, even if the audience is only members of their class. This can give even the least accomplished player a sense of performance and enhance the drama of 'making music'.

Drama games can be good starting points for composing a piece of music. These can be very simple.

Example

This game is based around greeting a friend. Instead of saying 'hello' or shaking hands, each pupil plays their own piece of music when they are greeted. In a class of mixed ability (including PMLD), each pupil can spend some time composing their own phrase of music. This can be improvised on the same instrument each time or can be a phrase which is repeated each time they are greeted. When the separate pieces are ready, one pupil (or an adult) chooses to greet each of the others. S/he approaches each person and says 'Hello, name' and that person replies through his or her composition. The 'hello' part can be sung if that is appropriate.

This sort of game can be repeated many times so that pupils with PMLD can begin to recognise the musical phrases and perhaps even anticipate what is to come from each person, especially if the compositions are very different from each other.

Improvised or simple repeatable phrases can be put into almost any story, however complex (eg. 'The Billy Goats Gruff' for young children or a story such as 'The Scarlet Pimpernel' for teenagers - mainly about chasing, hiding, surprising people and fighting. Alternatively, parts of longer stories can be used as inspiration for musical composition. Even if the pupils with PMLD cannot really understand a story such as 'The Snow Queen' or 'Gulliver's Travels', there are ways in which they can be involved in their telling.

Example

While working on the story of the Snow Queen, a small part could be taken for setting to music. This story is full of cold episodes with snow and ice and reflections which could suggest working on metal instruments. The last part of the story lends itself well to musical composition. Young Gretchen has been searching for her friend Kay who has been kidnapped by the Snow Queen and she finds him in her ice palace playing with ice and snow. His heart has been frozen and it is only when Gretchen cries with joy at finding him that her tears melt the ice in his heart and they escape to live happily ever after. Use metal instruments such as cymbals, triangles, bells, metalophones and glockenspiels to represent the icy beginnings and then contrasting sounds such as drums, maraccas and tambourines to end the piece to represent the warmth of the tears and living happily ever after.

Time can be spent on composing the two contrasting sections (either essentially improvised or more formal patterns) which can then be played one following the other to complete the piece. Performance can be accompanied by visual effects from shiny materials and narration which will give a multi-sensory experience.

There is really no end to the possibilities for inspiration for short compositions for young musicians with PMLD. What the pupils actually do is much the same each time, that is they choose instruments and improvise on them in whatever way they can. If they are able they can begin to develop some control over what they are playing and perhaps can write phrases that they can repeat or are repeatable by others. These compositions can be tape recorded or an amanuensis can write them down in some way. (Remember that the famous blind composer, Delius, had an amanuensis to write his music down for him). Profound intellectual impairment and complex disabilities should not be a bar to the experience of composing even though individuals will need much support. Remember also that it is better to 'lead from behind' (so that you give enough time, control and autonomy to individuals as possible) than from in front, when it is tempting to take over and play instruments hand over hand or decide that three beats on the drum is what is called for. Given time and opportunity, who knows what young composers with PMLD can achieve?

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Sensory Environments

for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties: innovations in design and practice

Introduction

In October 1998, a group of ten practitioners met for a full day at the University of Cambridge School of Education in order to focus on the use of sensory environments for pupils and students with profound and multiple learning difficulties. We agreed a number of purposes for the meeting:

- to consolidate views about good practice in this area and to drive forward developments;
- to secure a theoretical underpinning for the use of sensory environments in the curriculum and in pedagogy;
- to explore the possibility of an ongoing relationship, focused on research, development, advice and support, between practitioners and providers of services and equipment.

This meeting was convened at the suggestion of Mike Ayres, designer, and Richard Hirstwood, trainer. Mike and Richard are, of course, aware of the potential power of the current and emerging technology and have become interested in exploring the innovative ways in which it is being used. They are keen to avoid a situation in which practice becomes resource-led and are seeking a dialogue which will ensure that a full understanding of the needs and interests of learners drives forward new technological possibilities.

In order to give the meeting some structure, participants were each asked to prepare a brief report on their use of sensory environments and their understanding of the useful applications of sensory approaches. Participants were invited to go beyond a report of 'what we do' and 'how we do it' and to make some evaluative and reflective comments about the current state of the art of using sensory environments in schools.

One of the major themes emerging from the day, which we came to regard as a great strength, was the sheer diversity in policy, planning, practice and perceived outcomes reported by participants. The purpose of this brief article is to give a sense of that range of possibilities and to invite other practitioners, who may be having similar discussions in other parts of the country, to make contact with us in order to compare views. In Cambridge, our discussions covered a number of issues including the following.

Definitions

There was some debate at our meeting as to the meaning of the term 'sensory environment'. Participants used a variety of terms ('sensory studio'; 'interactive light and sound room'; 'white/light/dark rooms'; 'visual assessment room'; 'multi-sensory room'; 'sensory suite', 'sensory area') to describe the facilities in their schools and:

- some participants spoke about one major sensory resource within their schools (usually a 'room' or 'studio' or 'suite');
- others described several mini-environments, or sensory areas, including gardens, trails and corners, each with a distinct purpose;

- many of the contributors described the use of a range of portable, small-scale items of equipment which could be used to provide a 'sensory aspect' within any learning environment.

We felt that we needed to spend more time formulating views about the further development of this range of provision. There may be a need for both 'specialist environments', which could offer privacy or a sense of sanctuary in order for certain therapeutic procedures to be carried out in an appropriate setting, and for multi-functional spaces and resources, which would allow the sensory experience to be offered as an integral part of learning for more pupils. There may be a sense in which pupils develop emerging skills in specialist environments and then learn to generalise these capabilities out into a wider range of locations. The issue of using more small-scale equipment, including 'natural' and 'incidental' resources, in order to enhance the sensory dimension to learning in ordinary classrooms and community facilities was also seen as important. If it becomes possible to take the sensory experience to the learner, wherever he or she may be, rather than relying on the use of separate and specialist spaces, then anywhere can become a 'sensory environment'.

Policy, planning, assessment, recording and reporting

Participants' comments indicated a range of positions taken on the significance of dedicated sensory environments and whether they supported:

- a specialised 'sensory curriculum';
- access to subjects and other aspects of the whole curriculum (including the National Curriculum), which may be differentiated in order to provide a 'sensory dimension';
- and/or progress towards pupils' individual learning priorities, some of which might be described in terms of 'sensory targets'.

Rationales about the significance of sensory work in these terms tended to inform decisions made about reporting, and whether sensory work was seen as part of the annual report into experience and achievement in relation to the curriculum and/or part of the annual review of progress in relation to pupils' statements and individual education plans.

Most participants still tended to rely on paper formats for recording purposes. However, the use of information and communications technology as a way of recording pupil preferences, choices and responses and supporting the assessment and reporting processes was clearly seen as offering new and exciting options for the future.

Communication

All of the participants at the Cambridge meeting identified the provision of enhanced communication opportunities for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties as one of the key factors in their work and therefore in their use of sensory environments. We wanted to devote further time to clarifying the ways in which sensory experiences can promote communication, for example:

- by offering opportunities directly to develop, or consolidate, or generalise communication skills;

- by giving learners a sense of control, and therefore empowering them to want to communicate;
- by promoting interactions, either between adults and pupils, or between pupils and pupils, or between pupils and the technology that enables them to have an impact upon their environment.

The role of the sensory co-ordinator

Several contributors described themselves as having the role of 'sensory co-ordinator'. The responsibilities that went with this role seemed to be diverse, but were comparable to those of a subject co-ordinator. The role may, for instance, entail:

- purchasing and maintaining resources and equipment and providing technical support;
- offering induction, development, training and ongoing support to other staff;
- liaison with other agencies;
- contributing to the development of curriculum plans and priorities for individual learners.

It would be interesting to see if other practitioners see themselves as working in these sorts of ways and whether these roles have, in other schools, been formalised into posts of responsibility.

Training and development opportunities for all staff

Many people commented that expensive and sophisticated sensory environments could be mis-used to provide mere time-filling activities if staff were not made aware of their potential and their purposes. It was seen as important that:

- all staff should be helped to overcome any lingering technophobia;
- the issue of age-appropriateness in the use of sensory resources should be addressed;
- undifferentiated sensory bombardment for its own sake should be avoided;
- staff should learn to see themselves as the most important and the most sophisticated resource in any sensory environment and therefore avoid being disempowered by the technology.

Planning and practice, participants agreed, should not be resource-led but driven by the needs, interests and prior achievements of learners in the context of the curriculum.

Provision of instructions and support documentation

Some participants had gone to great lengths to provide written guidance for colleagues on the appropriate uses of sensory environments and sensory resources. While this was seen as an important part of the role of the sensory co-ordinator, the professionals who design, install and train people in the uses of sensory environments could do much more to provide clear pre-installation information and detailed guidance on the maintenance and application of available and emerging equipment.

A need for research

The variety of approaches described during the Cambridge meeting convinced participants that there is a real need for further research into the use of sensory environments, starting with a full audit of current practice. For example, contributors to discussions in Cambridge reported sensory environments being used to provide:

- simulations and dramatic reconstructions carefully planned and directed by staff in order to create access for mixed groups of pupils to various areas of the curriculum such as science, history or geography;
- opportunities for pupil-led exploration, investigation, problem-solving and discovery;
- a means of promoting pupil self-awareness and empowerment;
- a context for the development of skills in interaction and communication;
- a context for the development of sensory awareness, an understanding of cause and effect, and skills in environmental control;
- a resource used by professionals in support of assessment and pupil-profiling;
- individual therapy, leisure or relaxation.

These uses are not only different, but, in some senses, are expressions of contrasting ideologies, approaches and methods. It would be useful to explore this range of possibilities further and to enquire as to their compatibility. Some participants at the Cambridge meeting expressed concern that pupils were being required to adapt, from day to day and from session to session, to significantly different ways of working, all of them happening within the same familiar environment. It may now be appropriate to undertake a full evaluation of the uses of sensory environments even as further resources are devoted to their continuing development, installation and application.

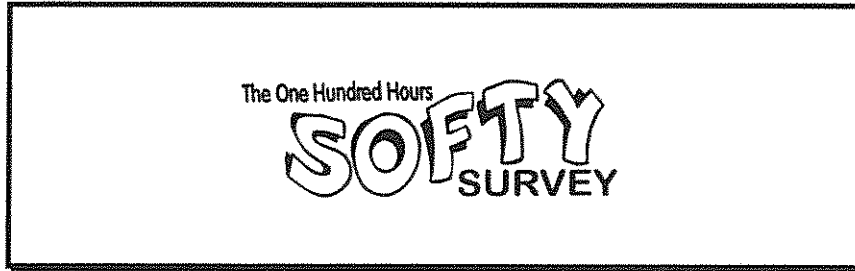
Closing comments

The sensory environments working group will be meeting in Cambridge again in the summer term. Participants would be very pleased to hear from other practitioners who may wish to make contact with the group in order to:

- make comments on any of the points made in this article;
- report on initiatives in other parts of the country;
- raise further issues for discussion.

If you are interested, please contact:

Richard Byers,
University of Cambridge School of Education,
Shaftesbury Road,
Cambridge. CB2 2BX.
Tel: 01223 369631
Fax: 01223 324421



The UK postal survey to influence the way services support parents of children with disabilities.

**What were your experiences?
Will you tell us about them so we can help other parents?**

The One Hundred Hours SOFTY (Support Over the First Two Years) Survey asks about support you received as parents. We will use the information you give us to campaign for better services all over the UK.

The questionnaire is confidential and need only take a few minutes of your time. The One Hundred Hours SOFTY Survey has already enlisted the views of many parents throughout the UK. We are still seeking more parents, however, especially from the South of England, Northern Ireland and Wales which are areas currently under-represented. We have decided to produce a separate report for Scotland which will be produced in the autumn. The initial results for the rest of the UK will be published in the summer.

If you would like to complete a SOFTY questionnaire on the support you have received as the parent of a child with disabilities or you can distribute questionnaires to parents, please get in touch. We can offer services their own unique report based on the responses from the questionnaires they distribute as well as the main report. The more parents who are involved in the Survey, the more useful the final reports will be.

The comments below are from SOFTY questionnaires we have already received from parents of children with disabilities.

"I would have liked someone to ask us how we were coping with the situation, to help us to ask the right questions. Instead we were left devastated, not knowing where to turn to".

"The best support I had was from a friend who also had a child with special needs - we could talk about anything".

"The best support I had was from my health visitor who was there whenever I needed someone to talk to.."

"The best support comes from other parents groups - emotional, information about benefits, how to get around the different systems etc."

"In the first year, we were too busy 'getting on with it' to worry about support for ourselves."

"Medically, we were well supported but I would have loved to talk to someone who understood the emotional stress we experienced."

"Filling in this survey was a reminder of how bad and, of course, how good the support we received is and was - it's been quite therapeutic! Thanks."

If you would like a copy (or more copies to give other parents), please call One Hundred Hours on 0121 441 1580. *Thankyou!*

**A letter sent to Loretto Lambe, Projects Director of PAMIS
by Mrs. K. Murphy MBE, Principal of Glenveagh School, Belfast**

Dear Loretto

I was reading with interest in the Christmas issue of PMLD Link your article on Music Movement and Dance. I remember meeting you at some conference or perhaps it was in Northern Ireland.

I am very interested in the way the Creative Arts can enrich the school curriculum. Since this school opened in January 1993 we have developed a very extensive Arts programme Through a group called the Friends of Glenveagh we raise money and we have Artists of the highest calibre coming into school to work with our pupils.

The following names show the extent of our programme.

Malcolm Neale and members of the Ulster Orchestra have ongoing workshops with the pupils.

Cathy O'Connor - an Irish dance teacher comes weekly.

Anthea McWilliams and Martin Wong - both modern dance teachers, do sessions throughout the year.

Ursula Burns - Harpist

Julie Sutton - Music Therapist

Angela Ginn, Ciara O'Malley and Diane Hobson - Artists also do sessional work with the pupils throughout the year.

Various Drama groups and musicians visit the school and the pupils are involved in their workshops through out the year.

We were very pleased to be asked by Ulster Television to televise our Christmas Concert this year. It went out on Christmas morning for one hour and there has been a tremendous response to it from members of the general public to the Permanent Secretary to the Minister of Education. The benefit of all areas of the Arts to our pupils development and quality of life cannot be over estimated. I enclose a tape of our television programme.* I hope you enjoy it.

Mrs. K. Murphy, Principal
Glenveagh School
Harberton Park
Belfast BT9 6TX

letters ... letters ... letters ...

* *Loretto will write about this tape in a future issue of PMLD-Link.*

SEMERC Information Service



52857
PMLD
The Old Rectory
Hope Mansfield
Ross-on-Wye
Herefordshire

GRANADA LEARNING - SEMERC
GRANADA TELEVISION,
QUAY STREET, MANCHESTER M60 9EA
TELEPHONE: 0161 827 2927
FAX: 0161 827 2966

02/02/99

HR9 5TJ

Dear Colleague,

I'd like to introduce you to the **SEMERC Information Service**, which will shortly be launched as part of the enlarged and updated **SEMERC** Internet site. **SEMERC**, which is part of Granada Learning, the UK's biggest educational software producer, is the premier source of resources and information for special needs.

For the past four years we have produced **SENSOR**, a special needs information service on BT's Campus Internet services. This information developed into a massive site in its own right so with the demise of BT Campus we have decided to make our expert information available to everyone rather than to only a few subscribers.

We have embarked on a programme to up-date, revise and expand the massive core of information built up over the years. Your organisation has been mentioned and we would like to check we have up-to-date information for our pages. We would appreciate any and all information about your organisation and how it provides help or resources for people who have special needs. This includes products, publications, research, services, projects, events, courses and all kinds of information and resources that might help people who have special needs and those who help them.

Where it is relevant to our readers we will offer, as a **FREE** service, to include contact information about organisations such as address, telephone, fax, email and web site. We would also like to have a short summary, say one hundred words, which describes each organisation. Where individual products, services and activities are important in their own right we would also like to create a page which can be linked to other parts of the **SEMERC Information Service**.

As we are an electronic service we would prefer to receive information electronically! Please reply to this letter by email if possible or on disc if you prefer. Images are particularly welcome.

Yours Sincerely,

J R Hughes, Chartered Educational Psychologist.
Editor of the **SEMERC Information Service**



GRANADA
Learning

FUTURE FOCUS Advocacy for People with PMLD

The theme for the next issue of PMLD-Link is 'Advocacy' and we would like to hear of ways in which your school, daycentre or workplace is meeting the challenge of ensuring that all those with profound and multiple learning disabilities are encouraged to:

- express their interests and views;
- make informed selections and choices;
- select friends;
- form relationships;
- make their individual sexuality known;

in order to take some control over their lives and to become less dependent and more empowered.

All of these are important, recognised elements of advocacy, which should lead to the removal of disempowering experiences. One dictionary definition of advocacy is 'providing active support' but, if such support is to ensure recognition of citizenship on the one hand and is an expression of an individual identity on the other, it is equally important to consider the initial preparation for it and, subsequently, the handling of its results.

What has to be built into the curriculum of any institution to *prepare* pupils and young people with PMLD for advocacy?

How are all staff to be encouraged to *listen* to the responses of their pupils and clients and finally to *act upon* such feedback?

These are difficult questions to address, but we do know that innovative work is developing in many areas, and the next PMLD-Link will give you an opportunity to share your ideas and comments on such initiatives.

Great progress has been made since the first groups of people with disabilities became engaged in advocacy. Historically, they were 'self advocates' with good communication and social skills (many of whom had physical disabilities), who campaigned against the dependent model of care (Miller and Gwynn, 1974). Later, they were joined by those with learning difficulties and the 'People First' movement was born (Hersov, 1996). By 1991, there were five hundred self advocacy groups world-wide, which collaborated to form SABLE (Self Advocates Becoming Empowered). Nevertheless, in order to ensure that those with learning disabilities (particularly with most severe and profound difficulties) to voice their own opinions and to become 'empowered', others have had to act on their behalf and professionals, parents, friends and peers have become their advocates.

But can well meaning and experienced professionals become objective enough to speak on behalf of others? People with PMLD are particularly vulnerable to professionals who *claim* to understand their needs and who then use the *knowledge* in order to plan services, to regulate their lives and, as a result, are able to secure their own professional futures (Mittler, 1996). Not only is there a danger that, by representing others, such advocates become guardians who impose their views and standards on the decisions made, but ultimately may, inadvertently, oppress and constrain those with PMLD by *protecting* them from the world (Tilstone and Barry, 1998).

In the SABLE mission statement the following are suggested as necessary if the 'voices' of those with learning disability (however mild, severe or profound) are to be taken seriously:

- the effective use of some form of communication;
- access to information;
- practice in choice and decision making;
- exposure to a range of relationships.

I am sure that all readers will agree and will be able to provide examples of good practice for our next issue. But how can such ideas and good intentions be put into practice? How can we encourage and enable:

- teachers and other professionals to help each child or young person to recognise that he or she is an individual in her own right?
- each person to teach others about their needs and wants?
Practical examples of such early work can be found in a mother's determination to act as an advocate for her daughter through the compilation of a *Care Book* which relied on her careful checking and rechecking of the responses of her daughter to a range of situations, and then recording them in order that others could learn from the experience (Fitton, 1994).
- young people to build up 'life pictures' and 'life quilts' which illustrate important events, relationships, and environments in their lives in order to contextualise important experiences (Grove and Park, 1996)?
- teachers to use methods such as Nind and Hewett's *Intensive Interaction* (Nind and Hewett, 1994)?
- all involved to adopt a collaborative, 'whole-school' (or establishment) approach to the teaching of self advocacy?

These are just some of the questions which arise about the processes, mechanisms and practical experiences surrounding advocacy for pupils and people with profound and multiple learning disabilities. Please let us have your ideas, and examples and descriptions of your own work in this exciting and demanding area.

**Christina Tilstone, Senior Lecturer
School of Education, The University of Birmingham**

References

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- Tilstone, C. and Barry, C. (1998) 'Advocacy and Empowerment: what does it mean for pupils and people with PMLD?' in P. Lacey and C. Ouvry (eds) *People with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities: a Collaborative Approach to Meeting Complex Needs*. London: David Fulton.

reviews *reviews* reviews *reviews*

Innovations in Health Care for People with Intellectual Disabilities.

Edited by Michael Kerr

Published by Lisieux Hall Publications 1998

This book provides the reader with thirteen well written chapters each looking at a different aspect of health care for people with learning disabilities split into two sections: 'Delivering Health Care' and 'Advances in Medical Science'. The contributors are from a wide variety of backgrounds and therefore each chapter is written at different levels. Some have presumed a level of understanding of their specialist area and the abbreviations and jargon which are associated with that speciality. Others are more descriptive, presuming little knowledge in the reader and therefore leading them through. As the reader works through the chapters a number of interesting points are raised pertaining to people with learning disabilities generally, including the situation of poor access to services, lack of health promotion and untreated illnesses. There are also some resolutions put forward including the need for more funding of primary care services, education of health care providers, increase in communication,

development of regional registers, plain English reports and improvements to surgery and clinic environments.

The first section pertaining to the delivery of health care considers the situation on a general basis then looks at some of the key areas in practice, namely, vision and hearing, mental health, women's health, oral health and sleep. Each of these chapters considers the aspects of good practice alongside theoretical information on the topic. This aspect of relating to practice is useful and well received by myself as a practitioner; not only does it assist in the revision of a topic or the gaining of new knowledge, but it provides some direction on application to practice and developments for service provision.

The second section relating to advances in medical science was a little more theoretical and may only be relevant to specialist learning disability healthcare providers and those who work within the area the chapter pertained to. Whilst there is much information contained within these chapters, there are a limited number of people who would be able to access that information. It was this second section of the book in which the use of jargon and abbreviations was

evident and made reading much more difficult.

On the whole the book is one which is easily read. The lack of an index makes access of information a little difficult in terms of reference. However each chapter is well laid out with subheadings which may resolve this problem. The text is written to include the whole population of those with learning disabilities with only one or two references to those with profound learning disabilities. It is difficult to write something which has relevance to every level of disability as each person's needs are different and whilst there is no direct reference to profound disabilities, the carer would be provided with sufficient knowledge to be able to apply this to their own area and to the needs of those people they support.

The book is certainly worth the £12.00 which Lisieux Hall Publications charge and would be well placed on the bookshelves of any professional library or learning disability service.

Christine Hutchinson is a Community Nurse in Learning Disabilities in the North West and a regional tutor with the University of Birmingham.

NEW BOOKS

People with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities: A Collaborative Approach to Meeting Complex Needs edited by Penny Lacey and Carol Ouvry. Published by David Fulton (1998)
ISBN 1-85346-488-0

Innovations in Advocacy and Empowerment for People with Intellectual Disabilities edited by Linda Ward, published by Lisieux Hall Publications

COURSES AND CONFERENCES

1999

MARCH

23rd

Communication Matters

Conference for all those concerned with supporting people with a learning disability and complex needs; commissioners, purchasers and providers in the statutory and voluntary sectors, including front line workers.

Organised by: Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities and Kings Fund/NDT

Speakers: Jane Jones
Dave Hewett

Venue: Mental Health Foundation. London

Contact: Julie Ballard
0171 5

APRIL

14th

Music and Communication - Music for Non-Musicians

A practical course for care staff who have little or no experience in music making who wish to use music in day to day work as a means of improving communication for adult clients with a visual and learning disability

Run by: RNIB Multiple Disability Services

Location: Canterbury (venue to be confirmed)

Further details: Simon Labbett, Music Officer
RNIB - Tel: 0171 388 1266

22nd

Challenging Behaviour and Assessment

A National Conference for specialist teachers, Therapists and educational psychologists working in the fields of visual and/or hearing impairment/severe learning difficulties

Run by: University of Birmingham
RNIB Education Support Services

Venue: University of Birmingham

Speaker: Professor Jan van Dijk

Further details: Sylvia Franklin-Kitchen
0181 968 8600

24th

Sherborne Developmental Movement - Level 1 and Level 2

Run by: Sherborne Foundation

Venue: Heathermount School, Ascot

Further details: Sherborne Foundation
1 The Vale, Pucklechurch
S. Glos BS16 9NW

27th Introduction to Intensive Interaction
This one day course will outline a method of working with people of any age who have profound learning disabilities and/or challenging behaviour. The focus will be on developing communication skills creatively through play.
Run by: roc training and consultancy
Venue: Dagnell Street Baptist Church
and Cross Street Centre, St. Albans
Further details: roc training and consultancy
Tel: 01923 663628

29th and 30th 'Starting MOVE'
This two day course provides an overview of the MOVE philosophy and will allow participants to start using the MOVE Curriculum in their own school, centre or at home.
Run by: MOVE International
Venue: Walsall
Further details: Move International
Tel: 01902 322858

MAY
8th

Day Conference - "Sound Moves"
For musicians, music educators, music therapists, professionals working with children with severe or profound multiple learning disabilities, students and parents.
Run by: RNIB
Venue: Ormerod School
Further details: Sally-Anne Zimmermann
RNIB tel: 0181 968 8600

20th and 21st 'Starting MOVE'
This two day course provides an overview of the MOVE philosophy and will allow participants to start using the MOVE Curriculum in their own school, centre or at home.
Run by: MOVE International
Venue: Walsall
Further details: Move International
Tel: 01902 322858

23rd to 25th Sherborne Developmental Movement - Level 3 Course
for those who have completed Levels 1 and 2, this residential course is tutored by a team of international specialists.
Run by: Sherborne Foundation
Venue: Heathermount School, Ascot
Further details: Dr. Elizabeth Marsden
Faculty of Education, Christ Church University College
1 North Holmes Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1QU

JUNE
17th

Choices and Challenges Meeting the needs of Children with: Multiple/Profound Disabilities: Complex Health Needs: Life Limiting Conditions
A workshop to explore the above issues.
Organised by: English National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting and Westminster College Centre for the study of Special Education
Venue: Westminster College, Oxford
Further details: Christina Cleary, ENB
1st Floor, Goldsmiths House
Broad Plain, Bristol BS2 0JP

2nd The NHS - Health for All?
MENCAP/GATEWAY Conference to launch
Mencap report. Keynote address by Frank Dobson,
Secretary of State for Health.
Run by: MENCAP
Venue: London
Further details MENCAP
Tel: 01273 623222

JULY

9th Commitment to Change
Conference for health professionals to improve the way
they talk to parents about a child's disability.
Run by: SCOPE with ENB and Nene University
Venue: Nene University, Northampton
Further details: 01908 243619

SEPTEMBER

13th bild Annual Conference - Frontiers in understanding learning disabilities
International conference highlighting the implications of current research
for future practice. Guest speakers of international repute; symposia
presentations; poster sessions, workshops and seminar papers.
Organised by: BILD
Venue: Westminster, London
Further details: Karen Clarke
Tel: 01562 850251
e-mail: Karen.Clarke@bild-edn.domon.co.uk

14th to 16th Better Breaks for the 21st Century
Second international conference on short term (respite) care which
will focus on innovative models of community based short term care for
children and adults. Keynote speakers, seminars, interactive workshop
presentations and exhibitions.
Organised by: Shared Care Network and Barnardos
Venue: Canterbury
Further details: Shared Care Network, Norah Fry Research Centre
Fax: 0117 946 6553
e-mail: v.jones@bristol.ac.uk
or c.e.robinson@bristol.ac.uk

AND AFTER THE MILLENIUM

25th MARCH 2000

Arts 2000? Where are the Arts now for children with Special Needs?
Keynote speaker; performance by children with special educational
needs; workshops for every Arts interest; exhibitions by artists working
with children with special educational needs; discussion forum - 'Taking
the Arts Forward'
Venue: Sunfield School, Clent
Further details: Jackie Wadlow
01562 882253

LEARNING PACKS

Better Choices - Fuller Lives: Working with People with Profound Learning Disability and Complex Support Needs

A six unit course for people involved in providing daily support for with people with profound learning disability. The materials may be used for independent or for group study.

Further information from BILD Distance Learning Co-ordinator, BILD, Wolverhampton Road, Kidderminster DY10 3PP

LONGER COURSES (with accreditation)

Interdisciplinary work with People with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities

A one year distance education or campus based course for practitioners and carers of children and adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities. The main focus is upon lifelong learning, communication and effective interdisciplinary collaboration.

Offered at four levels: Post experience certificate (level 1), Advanced Certificate (level 3), Postgraduate Diploma and Masters (level M)

University of Birmingham School of Education in conjunction with BILD

Further details: 0121 414 3466

M.Sc/PG Diploma in Learning Disability Studies

1 year full-time or 2 year part-time course.

This course meets the training needs of a variety of professionals involved in delivering services to children or adults with a learning disability, including registered nurses, social workers, doctors, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, officers in statutory, voluntary or private establishments, FE tutors, staff of SECs. It provides the opportunity to participate in and contribute to inter-disciplinary learning in a collaborative setting.

Further details: Stuart Cumella or Helen Bradley,

Department of Psychiatry, Queen Elizabeth Psychiatric Hospital, Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2QZ 0121 627 2853

Profound Learning Disability and Multi Sensory Impairments

Two year distance learning course with workshops. A selection of options is available in Year 2 including Ordinary Life Principles, Challenging Behaviour, Educational Issues and Inter-disciplinary working. This course is intended for people who work with children/adults who have complex needs (with possible additional sensory impairments). Courses are offered in a short single module format for one term, or leading to formal qualification at Certificate, Advanced Diploma or MSc levels.

Bursaries are available for suitable candidates at Certificate, MSc levels.

University of Manchester Faculty of Education in conjunction with Royal Schools for the Deaf, Manchester.

Further details: 0161 437 3577

EXBIBITIONS

PLANET display of leisure equipment on the following dates:

24-25 March: independent Living South West, Bristol
Contact: 01275 ;836;465

18-19 April: Nursery World Under 8's, Manchester
Nursery World, 0171 782 3136

28-29 April: Independent Living Scotland, Glasgow
01275 836465

15-16 Sept: Independent Living London, Wembley
01275 836465

17-19 Sept: Nursery World Under 8's, Olympia
Nursery World, 0171 782 3136

Further information from Planet, Cambridge House, Cambridge Grove,
London W6 0LE

Tel: 0181 741 4119

Fax: 0181 741 4505

18th to 20th May

NAIDEX International Exhiition

Venue: NEC Birmingham

Further details: Reed Exhibition Companies

Tel: 0171 910 78873

Please

*let us know if you have found any
books, videos, equipment,
playthings, leisure resources etc.
that you think are particularly
useful. Tell us about your
favourite resources and how you use
them, or any articles, books ,videos
or courses which have changed your
way of thinking or of doing things.*