

**PMILD****LINK**

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

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

In this spring issue of PMLD-Link we have three very informative articles all with a different slant on Multisensory Environments and all written by people who are well known in the area. The articles cover the design, use and research into best practice relating to Multisensory environments. These articles are complemented by the article from Sunfield about their current research into the effect of colour on behaviour - an important aspect of the environment which is often given less thought than it deserves. If you have had any particular successes - or spectacular failures! - in a multisensory environment it is not too late to tell us about it in the next issue.

Very many thanks to all contributors to this issue, not only for all the articles, whatever the topic, but for the reports about courses and conferences which helps those readers who are unable to get to them, to keep up with the issues raised, to know the gist of what has been discussed, and any conclusions or recommendations which have come out of the discussions.

More *news* this time and congratulations to Tina and Mike Detheride of Widgit Software for their well deserved Millennium Award. The news does not always have to be quite so spectacular as this - a new service, or building, a great achievement by an individual or an organisation. Let me know in time for the summer issue.

The topic for the next issue is *Transition* - an inevitable life experience which can cause much heartache and distress if it is not managed sympathetically. In **Future Focus** Rob Ashdown reminds us of the many different times of transition and some of the issues involved. Please send your comments, ideas and examples of how you go about helping your own family, your clients, your pupils and their families and carers to cope with this recurring life experience.

Articles, reports, or any other material for the next issue should reach me by the middle of September. Please let me know the contact address (postal and/or e-mail) and telephone number, so that readers can follow up ideas they read about in the articles.

Send material for the next issue to me by post or e-mail by 4th September to the address below.

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# *Designing the Multisensory Environment*

In this paper I argue for flexibility and a transdisciplinary team approach when working with individuals with profound multiple disabilities (PMLD) in the multisensory environment (MSE). Twelve MSE design prototypes are identified, enabling team members to engineer the environment to promote particular outcomes. Team members inform the design process by mapping pedagogical approaches through ongoing assessment to maximise the programme-environment-individual fit.

Traditional approaches to MSE use, be they educational or therapeutic, child-led or facilitator-led, passive or interactive (Hulsegge and Verhuel, 1987; Hirstwood and Smith, 1996; Bozic, 1997), all have been limited by a rigid 'single minded' interpretation of how the MSE space should be used. I have argued elsewhere (Pagliano, 1998) that an 'open minded' approach within the context of a transdisciplinary team is a more rational and effective way to achieve pedagogical outcomes in individuals with PMLD.

The MSE provides a unique opportunity for an integrated approach for professionals to work together in a setting that is jointly owned. An 'open minded' approach promotes a flexible inclusive, multifunctional use of the space and frees professionals from the constraints of traditional working practices. In a transdisciplinary team the roles are not fixed. Decisions are made by professionals collaborating at a primary level (rather than at a secondary level as in a multidisciplinary team). The boundaries between disciplines are deliberately blurred to employ a "targeted eclectic flexibility" (Pagliano, 1999, p. 120). The team members are collectively free to use the MSE in a spirit of democratic collaboration, where common goals are identified and ways are devised to work together consistently and effectively. The focus of the team is on outcomes achieved by the individual with PMLD using the MSE (Pagliano, 1999).

The MSE can be engineered to meet an individual's needs. To do this the transdisciplinary team must identify those needs through ongoing assessment and then engineer the MSE to best fulfil those needs. When used in such a wide-ranging inclusive responsive way, the MSE can be defined as

*"a dedicated space or room for relaxation and/or work, where stimulation can be controlled, manipulated, intensified, reduced, presented in isolation or combination, packaged for active or passive interaction, and temporarily matched to fit the perceived motivation, interests, leisure, relaxation, therapeutic and/or educational needs of the user. It can take variety of physical, psychological and sociological forms." (Pagliano, 1998, p.107)*

The physical, psychological and sociological forms of the MSE encompass 12 design prototypes as discussed below. Each design has a primary function. The fundamental principle is the importance of the figure-ground relationship. Manipulation of this relationship enables fine-tuning of the design prototype.

1) The white room has white walls, floor and ceiling. The room itself is the neutral ground (somewhat akin to a large 3D screen) on which various visual effects (figures) can be presented. This is the commonest form of MSE and is often used for leisure and relaxation.

2) The dark room has black walls, floor and ceiling. These combine to make a black ground on which visual images can be presented with a maximum definition and a minimum of visual distraction. The principal use of this room is for those with vision impairment, both ophthalmological and cortical. Supplementary equipment that can be used to provide the figure include torches, fibre optic sprays, iridescent paint and play dough, coloured and ultraviolet lights.

3) The sound space is enclosed by wooden walls, ceiling and sprung wood floor. Sound is the figure. Soundproofing ensures that the space is not contaminated by extraneous outside noises. The principal use of this room is for those with auditory impairment, both auricular and cortical. Supplementary equipment that can be used to provide the figure include musical instruments, echo chamber, resonance board, tape/CD/radio stereo and headphones, FM and sound beam. Emphasis is placed on the user making connection between a personal action and a resultant sound, be that vocal or percussive.

4) The interactive area contains vocal or movement sensitive equipment, particularly switches, which enable the child by a small movement to consistently produce an immediately rewarding effect. An exciting development is the technology that allows "a person to turn on and off an electrical appliance using EEG signals" (Mind Switch, University of Technology Sydney, 1999). The principal use of this room is to promote an understanding of the relationship between cause and effect. Constancy is the ground, the figure is change.

Some design prototypes make use of specialised physical environments to promote the MSE ethos.

5) The water area is a pool filled with water, with supplementary equipment such as jacuzzi, shower, waterfall, slide, lights and water heating equipment. Many children with severe physical disabilities are able to produce movements in water that would not be possible otherwise. Personal movement of body parts is the figure in the figure-ground relationship as the principle use of this design prototype is kinaesthetic stimulation to promote body awareness and body concept.

6) The soft play environment provides a safe enclosed space where children can explore, take risks and interact with the equipment and each other. A blind child, eg, may feel confident enough to climb on the soft play furnishings but be too frightened to play in a less protected playground. Equipment may include a ball pool, soft play furnishings and construction shapes. The principal use of this area is to promote large scale physical exploration and manipulation.

7) The portable environment is one that can be folded up and stored in a container for easy transportation from one location to another. It can include a wide range of multisensory stimulation features, graded in complexity from very simple to challenging. The principal use of this design prototype is to make the MSE more easily accessible to those in isolated remote areas. They can be loaned from toy libraries and

resource centres.

8) The virtual environment is achieved through 3D interactive computer imaging. Lanier (1999) identifies the objective of virtual reality as "to provide exactly the stimulus to the person's sense organs that (person) would receive if... (that individual was) in fact in an alternate environment". For the eyes there are head-mounted displays. For the hand there are gloves which become virtual hands. "The goal is to see how can you use technology and mold it to a person instead of asking the person to come to the technology. In the future virtual reality systems will be individualised " (ibid). Fruchterman (1999) believes advances in computer technology "will create a world where the individual will have extensive control over his or her personal environment. We are increasingly crossing into an era where technology will be able to accomplish almost anything I can imagine". The principal use of this design prototype is to prepare the child for such a future.

Other design prototypes address psychosocial issues.

9) The inclusive area is a regular environment, such as a verandah, garden or playground, converted into a MSE by adding carefully selected appropriate multisensory features. The result is a space more suitable for those with disabilities, but strongly appealing to all children. The principal use of this design prototype is to promote inclusion in the mainstream.

10) The pluralist environment promotes awareness and a multi-perspective understanding. It focuses on temporal change of the MSE. If the MSE stays the same it becomes stale and children stop participating. Suggestions to achieve a pluralist environment include the use of themes (such as the sea, space, festivals, indigenous culture) and performances (such as art exhibitions, music, acting out a story) with value placed on diversity.

11) The social space helps the child develop a sense of "who am I?", an essential prerequisite for communication and social interaction. Communication begins with being aware of self, one's needs, wants and desires, being aware of others and wanting to share ideas, experiences or feelings with them. It is a space for special occasions and get-togethers. "If parents and non-disabled brothers and sisters" and friends "see the children happy, laughing and relaxed, as they so often are in the MSE, they're going to relate to them more than if they see them cranky, throwing their arms and legs around, dribbling and angry. (therapist)" (Pagliano, 1999, p.10). The principal use of this area is to promote a sense of self through communication in a sympathetic environment.

The final design prototype is a synthesis of the other prototypes and represents the MSE in its most developed form.

12) The hybrid environment contains features from two or more MSE forms. The principal function is to provide a vehicle by which to integrate the functions identified in the other eleven forms. In the hybrid environment transdisciplinary team members constantly (re)design the MSE to suit the emerging, particular, multiple, learning needs, interests and abilities of users. The hybrid environment is flexible and in a continual state of (re)construction.

An inclusion discourse highlights the responsibility the school has to "treat all children firstly as pupils, and concentrate on pedagogical solutions to do with curriculum which all teachers might use" (Fulcher, 1989, p.9). Keeping a record of pedagogical approaches used in the MSE encourages the educator to expand the range of pedagogical approaches and make them as consistent whenever possible with those used in regular education (Pagliano, 1999). Mapping pedagogical approaches through ongoing assessment maximises the programme-environment-individual fit. An outward based approach circumvents seduction by the MSE, which in essence is only a tool, a means to an end, to effect some positive change in an individual's life. Accompanying the power to engineer the MSE is a parallel increased duty of care on the transdisciplinary team to ensure this tool is used responsibly.

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# Using Sensory Environments

A range of specialist facilities now exists for children with compound difficulties. For those with visual dysfunctions, the multisensory environment is a well-established favourite. It competes with swimming pools and ball pools, and is sometimes combined with these by creative people looking for variety in sensory stimulation.

In the early days it was not uncommon to find rooms where trigger-happy staff would switch on every gadget and pile the whole class in for a map rumpus. As people acquired expertise in the use of these new resources, more thought was put in and children nowadays tend to be introduced gently and individually to the rooms.

The biggest change in the equipment has been the addition of a myriad switches that allow even the most disabled child to make things happen out there as an act of will. It is really only with this approach that the battery of gadgets can be described as strictly educational.

When Snoezelen pioneered the environments they were designed as a leisure pursuit for adults and the calming effect was sold as relaxation therapy. Now it is an adjunct to the curriculum and is a valued tool for the teachers who are determined to empower their least active students.

The exchange of ideas in the RNIB publication *EyeContact* in 1992 raised the possibility of misuse or ineffective use. I asserted that the rooms were only as good as the people who use them and the experience for some client groups is a time filler during which no learning takes place or where negative effects are achieved. Students have been observed withdrawing psychologically from the overwhelming battery of lights and unfathomable sequences of events.

I still have misgivings about the way these expensive resources are utilised and the tendency of staff to regard them as the only place where visual stimulation occurs. For me they are most useful as diagnostic tools where careful observation of individuals can reveal behaviour that cannot be seen elsewhere. These observations of responses can be used as hypotheses which enable workers to then present stimuli in other less contrived situations in a way that is most likely to produce an organised visual response. This might mean approaching the child or offering food, for example, from the direction left or right, up or down, where vision is thought to be most effective.

Cushioned environments invite romper room behaviour from staff and some ambulant and excitable students. They also stifle echoes - the means by which many blind people orient themselves to sounds and in space. The tradition of white surroundings has a particular effect which does not suit all visually impaired learners, some of whom only discover their available vision against dark backgrounds. Dazzling lights and silver glitter or shiny surfaces may have the undesired effect of startling children into opting out of the very looking behaviour we are trying to encourage.

Children who have cerebro-visual disturbances and other deep neurological problems will find it impossible to control and synchronise eyelid, pupil, head and body position to the best advantage when conflicting demands are made on their strategies in muddled presentation of materials.

So what is to be done?

- Arrange for calmness and clarity in the journeys towards the specialist room so that the wheelchair users can anticipate their journey's goal - with objects of reference or symbols if necessary for children who may not have understood the spoken message.
- Find times when a child can contemplate their existence with just one companion and the switches.
- Have a viewing aperture so that staff proximity to students cannot be misconstrued.

- Reduce the number of interruptions in a session. Discourage visitor disturbance and other noise from work in the school. Such events are often more exciting than the stimulus supposedly on offer.
- Allow a period of interpersonal, face to face conversation so that the child knows who they are with as well as where they are and not just what is required of them (I observed a session where the teacher held a limp child close to her and breathed in and out at the same pace as the child who, for the first time, lifted her head and made eye contact; there was no need for gadgets that day, just a tissue to wipe the teacher's tears of joy).
- Let the child attend to the objects and switches without invasive outbursts intended as social "reinforcers". Cries of "good reaching" etc. turn the process into a more complicated social and language event which may be more than the child can manage while still engaging in the task. Some students are misled thereby into believing that the purpose of the enterprise is to please the adult rather than for their own enlightenment.
- Observe whether the child has registered the fact that it is they who have brought about the change of events out there. Allow plenty of time for the penny to drop and repetition until you are sure that the cause and effect are established in the mind of the child (called functional dependency in play schema parlance).
- Have a spotlight directed at the attractive and relevant object (your face?) that is rewarding to the sense of touch as well as vision and that fits into class activities (it is not desirable to have children look at the light source itself).
- When using an overhead projector, shield the platform from the child's view as it will be a more intense light than the projected image and avoid the noisy ones with fans.
- Some children may need to have their own hands as the subject of their coursework before they are asked to use them for reaching and grasping.
- Some shampoos glow in ultraviolet light and when wiped on the child's hands, their tight or toneless fingers glow brightly so they are encouraged to make deliberate movements. Similar work can be done in natural light by putting striped and colourful gloves on the hands to interest the child (black and white stripes are particularly effective for babies or children who have cortical visual impairment and tend to gaze past objects to view them with peripheral vision).
- Any speech should be aimed at what the worker thinks the child is experiencing. Sessions with no speech at all can be very effective; one child on such an occasion who had never spoken before uttered his first word "More".

I believe it was Sally Silverman who recommended that if all this doesn't work then eat plenty of Quality Street. My suggestion is that if it doesn't work, try something else. No sense burning yourself out with the same old stunts that leave your clients unmoved.

By the way, it's OK to go into the sensory room and enable the child to "just play". After all, playing is the nature of work and learning for people at early levels of development

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## ***Developing the Use of Multisensory Environments***

We have recently completed a project investigating good practice in the use of multisensory environments (MSEs). This project, funded by British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTA) aimed to bring together professionals working with children in a range of provision. It included a meeting of a focus group and five case study visits to schools. The focus group was pan-disability and straddled a wide range of pupil need and staff function. Some professionals worked as class teachers whilst others operated in a more advisory role. We then observed practice and interviewed staff working in five different forms of provision: a school for pupils with visual impairments, a school for pupils with hearing impairment, a school for children with severe learning difficulties, a learning support base in a mainstream primary school, and a school for pupils with sensory and learning disabilities. Here we draw on these case study visits to respond to some of the questions we raised in a previous article in *PMLD-Link*. A fuller report of our findings together with the guidelines for good practice can be found on the web-site [www.becta.gov.org/inclusion/sen/resources/multi\\_sensory](http://www.becta.gov.org/inclusion/sen/resources/multi_sensory).

### **How can we ensure that behaviour and development of the pupil in a MSE links to other classroom work?**

We asked this question because of concern that MSEs appear on the timetable as a subject in their own right, something distinct that happens at particular time of the week with limited connection to other curriculum work. In our case studies two different ways of working in MSEs were evident. For some schools, with some pupils the multisensory room was used to meet individual needs. These needs included the development of the senses, an understanding of cause and effect, exploring the environment through touch, developing choice, and interacting with others. In other schools the multisensory environments were used as a vehicle for enriching the curriculum often utilising the dramatic properties that can be created in such spaces. In these instances the environments were often used for groups of pupils working together.

#### ***Meeting Individual Needs***

Staff in our case study schools talked about the facility of multi sensory environments to provide the conditions to kick-start the use of a sense or to act as a catalyst for a particular aspect of development. For example one teacher gave the following description:

*"Sometimes children will begin to develop visual skills, which they haven't before because they haven't had that amount of contrast before... A couple of children have made enough progress so that no one would be in any doubt that they had some sight, even though their notes say they are blind.... one child was in a wheelchair. He kept his hands under his tray and didn't want to interact... He did begin to get interested in things under the ultraviolet light and did begin to reach and.. to reach out to bright things in a normal environment. At the same time he was beginning to walk and use a rolator. Then he had reason to use his light perception because he was beginning to move. So his whole development has been aided by him learning to use his vision in that kind of way.... He still needs very high contrast"*

This teacher was illustrating how multisensory environments can be set up to provide carefully targeted stimulation of a particular sense - more usually vision. Staff need to be knowledgeable about the development of that sense and in the example above of the controlled use of ultra violet light.

Work in a multi sensory environment need not however focus on the use of vision. For one teacher its use was linked to developing exploration in a pupil who is blind. The start of the process was to utilise his tremendous love of music as a reward for touching a switch. His teacher describes her work:

*"He's tactile defensive, he doesn't tend to reach out and grasp anything without adult intervention. He doesn't explore the world around him so that's why my aim is for him to understand that he has some control over the world and to search for that control... at the moment we're [aiming] for him to understand that he can uncurl his fingers, touch the switch, activate the music reward, enjoy the music and when it stops do the same again..."*

In order to promote exploration, the teacher plans for progression so the switch will be gradually moved a little further away and then the position changed. The teacher has carefully chosen the switch for although he can use a head switch she wants him to use his hands because as she says

Not all of the observed teaching was heavily structured. Indeed one of the aspects of good practice that was put forward by the focus group was the need to balance teacher directed sessions with child-led opportunities for learning. We observed one pupil who was largely unresponsive in a structured teacher led session where he was required to match colours. When he was on his own and the member of staff had left he was observed carefully pressing switches that resulted in particular colour changes in the bubble tube. As his teacher says:

*'he likes to discover things in his own time...'*

Another teacher further elaborated on the usefulness of the MSE:

*"What happens with a lot of our students is that they either plateau or get stuck on a certain skill, for instance colour matching and its up to us as teachers to find a creative way of teaching... it is really another way of them experiencing colour... its good fun to sit in the dark. It has far more impact than it would in a nice sunny classroom..."*

### **Curriculum focus**

In all the above case studies the starting point for using the MSE had been the identification and analysis of a pupil's need. In the following examples the first consideration was the curriculum area and here the dramatic potential of the MSE played a key role in how it was used with some groups of pupils.

One of the teachers described how they used the space theme projector picture from the multisensory room as a catalyst for developing a story: the pupils added to the picture of the rocket projected on the wall by creating stars using the mirror ball and a white spotlight and then creating some sound effects to accompany the picture using a tape recorder and switch. They then created a story which was recorded back in the classroom on computer using both text and images. This provides further learning opportunities for the teacher to capitalise on, for example the teaching of

initial blend sounds in space, ship and start. Just as importantly however the activity provides an opportunity for problem solving - working out how to create sound effects and how to activate them at the appropriate stage of the story.

This example was provided by a teacher with responsibility for technology. In the mainstream school the art specialist used the MSE to promote understanding of how people used to live. She used the environment to recreate scene of how cave men used to live.

*".....we were looking at early experiences of cave people. It was hugely successful in the studio, the darkroom was set up with sticks for the fire - we rubbed the florescent sticks together really hard. Someone - a member of staff just flicked on and off (the ultraviolet light) so it just sparked. Then once they got going and the fire was on all the time, we told stories about those days, what animals did you meet. Then with the echo panel we made noises like wind through the caves or storms or animal noises and all of these things were superbly successful.."*

In this way the room was used by almost all the children in the school at some point. This experience of a MSE room in a primary school led us on to consider a further question.

### **How can we best use MSEs to promote inclusive practices ? How can they be best used as a wider resource?**

In the case of this primary school the room was established as a resource for the community. It was used by local nurseries, both mainstream and special and it was also used by those working in the peripatetic services for children with visual impairments and hearing impairments. Many of the younger children are accompanied by their parents. The headteacher stressed the importance of the users recognizing that it is a learning facility rather than a recreational one and to identify educational aims and outcomes. He warns of the dangers that:

*"It becomes like an Aladdin's cave for some people and they just want to see lights flashing and music playing, cymbals crashing - which is great fun and we believe in education being fun but it also has to have a purpose. "*

The school has developed a policy of ensuring that all visitors complete a form, stating the purpose of the use of the room and which pieces of equipment they wish to use. Within the school all staff have had an induction course to familiarise them with the equipment. In this way there is encouragement for all within the school to use the facilities.

### **How can we develop good whole school practice in the use of multisensory environments and who should be responsible for monitoring this?**

The starting point for a whole school policy must be a shared understanding of the purpose of the MSE. The schools we visited often referred to these environments by different names and this reinforced the philosophy the school adopted towards the multisensory environment. For example some schools referred to them as "interactive" rooms. This highlighted the importance given to ensuring that pupils were encouraged to gain control over their environment. The purpose was not for passive stimulation but to enable control and choice making. In the mainstream school the room

was referred to as "The Studio", and echoes its flexible use as a music studio and a drama studio. This title promotes the use of the environment for particular creative purposes and ensures that the wider opportunities for curriculum work are appreciated by the whole school.

The purpose of the MSE leads the school to being selective about the equipment they order, (although budget also plays a key role). One school wanted to maximize access and therefore sought equipment which was as flexible as possible. They knew from experience that certain pieces - the ball pool and bubble tubes were used by a wide range of pupils. Once these could be made interactive through the use of a variety of types of switch their function could be further enhanced. Elsewhere, another school gave priority to a particular group of pupils - these included those with multisensory impairments. Careful thought was therefore given to the tactile sensations that could be accessed, and the need for a smaller environment that could be safely explored and yet also provide some important mobility experiences of balance.

Responsibility for the MSE has varied across settings. For example in one school it lay, as we have seen, with the technology teacher, in another with the teacher responsible for physical disability. In another setting a learning support assistant had prime responsibility. Whoever has this role it is important that they promote careful attention to issues of health and safety, and monitor the use of the environment.

Further important whole school issues include how time in the MSE is allocated - whether staff have to make a particular case for its use and if so whether this extends to particular times.

## **Conclusion**

Originally we had been concerned that these, often costly resources, were not always being used to full effect. Our visits however revealed that many teachers and other staff used these environments well to meet individual needs, often to kick-start new learning, as well as a vehicle to enhance the curriculum. Both situations were especially valuable where pupils were actively involved by making decisions about the way the environment was used. The use of interactive technology was essential in making this happen.

It also became apparent that it was essential that there were whole school policies which provided a coherent framework and ensured that practices were shared, if all staff and pupils were to fully gain from this resource.

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# ***The Sunfield Colour Impact Project \****

**Pre-pilot: May - December 1999**

## **Introduction**

The main aim of the Sunfield Colour Impact Project is to investigate the impact of changing coloured light on communication opportunities for young people with severe autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This short article is intended as an introduction to the research currently being undertaken at Sunfield. It briefly describes the Colour Impact Room and some initial indications. The project is being presented at the Autism Europe Congress in Glasgow in May 2000. A full scientific report will be published in due course.

The Colour Impact Project uses colour as an artistic medium through which young people with severe ASD are enabled to take part in spontaneous interaction. As with artistic therapies, particularly music, the art form is used as the vehicle for interaction, rather than spoken language. Emotion and mood are appealed to instead of the intellect.

The spectrum of our changing emotions provide an incentive to communicate in various forms - non-verbal and verbal (e.g. love /liking /sorrow /anger /frustration / etc.). Individuals with ASD can often express extremes of emotions but have difficulty in recognising or communicating the full spectrum of human emotions. They appear to connect emotions with exterior effect as opposed to being integral with themselves (Powell and Jordan, 1997).

From qualitative studies, it appears that there is a universal subliminal association between colour and emotion, which may be linked to physical effect (e.g. effects described by normally developed adults as an interior self-focus in blue, producing a sense of withdrawal; and a sense of externally applied pressure in red, producing a sense of anger). The effect of incrementally changing colour light environments may induce a corresponding 'emotional'/physiological effect in individuals who have impaired access to emotional understanding and expression. This may introduce the young person to the experience of more subtle shades of emotion via physiological effect and come to increase the opportunities and incentives that young people have to communicate.

In normal human communication, there is always a degree of emotional 'movement', e.g. the rise and fall of pitch or the degree of tension during a conversation. In autistic individuals, this 'movement' does not normally take place in a free and healthy way. We are seeking to encourage this 'movement' through the use of changing coloured light environments in order to facilitate interaction and communication which is more meaningful and satisfying for the child. Thus, colour is used as a kind of 'mediator' between adult and child.

## **Description of the Colour Impact Room**

*The room:*

The room can be divided into two areas: one side is smaller and empty; the other is larger and contains selected colour soft play objects.

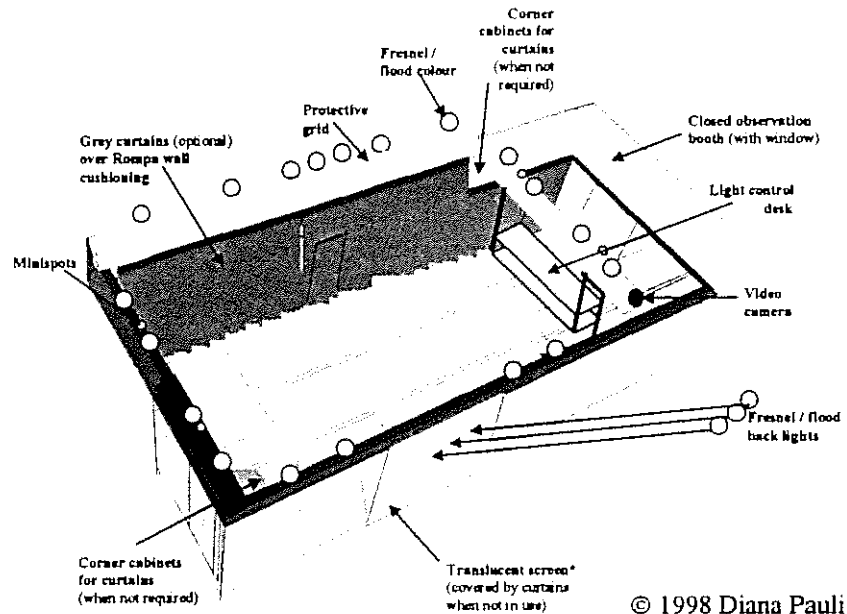
\*In the earlier days of Sunfield (1930s-60s) pioneering work was attempted to find new educational methods and therapies. This explored the use of colour, both in paints and as coloured light. Indications were then (and have been subsequently supported through recent published academic research) that colour could be used to affect behaviour - differing hues producing different moods and attitudes (cf. Geuter, Wilson and 1 (1940s-70s: unpublished), the mechanism being unconscious and independent of intellect. The present research is seen as a continuation of this work.

### *Walls and floor:*

'Rompa' soft play cushioning covers the walls and floor to provide a safe and comfortable environment. The colour is neutral grey, so that the whole room will take up the colour of the light. The young person can therefore be totally surrounded by colour. On one side, there is a translucent screen which can be used for making coloured shadows. As the young person and/or therapist moves in front of the screen, multiple coloured shadows are thrown on to the screen from three different coloured spotlights. A 'dance' of changing overlapping colours can thereby be produced.

### *Lighting:*

Stage lighting equipment comprising 32 x 500W Fresnels and 4 x 500W Floods, has been used. These are grouped to give the following five colours: blue, pink, red, green and yellow. (The colours can easily be changed.) The lighting is controlled by a computerised dimmer system and mounted around the top of all four walls behind wire grills.



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### **Methodology developed during the pre-pilot research**

- Following baseline data collection, young people attended the colour room at least once per week for a session of between 3 and 20 minutes.
- A 'welcome' colour was established for young people to indicate the beginning of the session depending on which colours they were observed to be most calm in. (For most young people, this seemed to be blue or blue/pink.)
- Young people were introduced to the room with caution, gradually introducing colour into the white light, and increasing the colour light saturation in the room over a period of several weeks.
- The first colour sequences moved slowly between blue and red, passing gradually through all the shades of violet, purple and pink. Red and blue were chosen as the two main colours thought to create opposite mood effects. (These are used in language to express emotion, e.g. 'see red' and 'feel blue'. There are similar expressions in other languages, e.g. French, German, Japanese and Chinese, etc.)
- Following this, a more complex colour sequence was developed containing slow sweeps from blue through purple and pink to red, then back again, sometimes continuing through to green.

- The end of session was indicated by the return of the white lights alone.
- Non-participant observation techniques were employed by psychology assistants (next phase will introduce inter-rater reliability), and young people were video-recorded in the Colour Impact Room. Video evidence was used to establish the effectiveness of different approaches during the pilot phases, and to try out different methods of data analysis. (During the next phase, video records will be systematically analysed and subject to triangulation.)
- Data will be quantitatively analysed; behaviour trends will be identified and compared.

### **Preliminary observations (pre-pilot)**

Preliminary findings suggest that different colours and colour changes do have different effects on young people. There is some consistency of young people's responses to colours observable within sessions (e.g. a young person will become markedly calmer within a particular colour/colour change). However, these effects do not always hold to particular colours from week to week. The colour a young person found calming one week, will generate a burst of activity two weeks later. How the young person reacts to colours seems to depend upon the mood of the young person on entering the Colour Room.

#### *Colour Response Profile (CRP)*

Once the young person is at ease in the room, their CRP can be established. The CRP is the graphic representation of the changing pattern of specific, usually stereotypic, behaviours (e.g. flicking, etc.) across a standard colour light sequence. This information about the young person's reaction to colour light changes will inform the light desk operator's response to the young person in the next phase.

#### *Interactive phase - Colour Mood Dialogue (CMD)*

In the Colour Impact Room, the colour mood can be artistically changed through the use of dimmers. The young person responds through gesture and vocalisation to the mood created by the colour. The light operator then responds back to the young person by sensitively and artistically altering the colour of the room in a way which gives an 'answer' to the young person. The young person now makes a further response which is similarly 'answered' by the lights. Thus the adult input into the interaction is via the medium of changing colour. This spontaneous two-way improvisation is what we have called the 'CMD'. Through this very 'primitive' and non-intellectual medium, the young person is enabled to find a 'receptable' \* and satisfying form of self-expression. Once the 'habit' of reciprocal interaction has been established, it is hoped that this can lead on to more sophisticated forms of interaction and communication.

#### *Self-regulation of behaviours:*

Another approach which is under investigation is where the light desk operator ascribes 'colour light meaning' to the young people's selected response behaviours by associating them with different colour changes. In response to a particular behaviour pattern, the operator will introduce an associated colour. All young people so far observed have appeared to make the connection between their stereotypic activities and particular light changes, and have regulated these behaviours in order to initiate light colour change. (Data collection on-going.)

\* *receptable = able to be received, accepted, understood and responded to*

### ***Communication phase (to be further developed)***

An adult is reintroduced to the room and works with the young person following the young person's lead in behaviour/colour association; (Collis and Lacey, 1996; Hewett and Nind, 1998; Nind and Hewett, 1994) to develop the CMD further as a basis for communication. Once patterns of communication have developed, other stimuli may be introduced - e.g. colour shadow screen, items of white Rompa soft play, etc.

It is anticipated that gradually the colour light intervention (as the medium for increased communication opportunities) can be phased out. It is hoped that the new patterns of interaction developed through the Colour Impact Project will continue to allow the young people with ASD access, as equal partners, to creative communication within their wider environment.

Results will be published following analysis of data on completion of the project's pilot phase. As a result of work so far, the following qualitative statements can be made with some confidence:

Young people with autism notice, are attentive to and respond to colours.

For most, the level of agitation/calmness can be altered by colour.

When colour changes deliberately interact with the young person by responding to their behaviours, there is a marked increase in attentiveness (CMD).

CMD is a form of communication.

CMD is a pleasurable experience.

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*The current immediate research team includes: Professor Barry' Carpenter(Director), Diana Pauli (Director of Research), Claire Lees, Emma Arnold, Di Ashworth, Dawn Turley (Psychology Assistants) and Jo Egerton (Research Officer). Other professionals are associated with the project in an advisory capacity.*

**Sunfield would like to thank** Di Pauli for designing the room and John Watson of Creative Lighting Design Tel. 01773 712130 ) for installing it; the Michael Wilson Foundation for finding the lighting; Harkness Hall Ltd Tel. 0181 953 3611) for donating the 2-way screen to the Colour Impact Project and Rompa (Tel. 01246211777) for donating items of Soft Play.

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## **Access to eye care for adults with learning difficulties**

At RNIB today we have had some 'fairly typical' telephone calls about eye care for adults with learning difficulties:

A nurse from a CTLD looking for a 'nice optician to test a PMLD adult'.

A speech and language therapist trying to obtain a functional assessment of vision for a young woman before discussing if she should 'graduate to Makaton or stick with objects of reference.

An aunt asking how a young man with unsteady gait and involuntary movements could be helped to keep his glasses on.

A brother phoning about a second opinion when cataract surgery had been refused. He thought the ophthalmologist was prejudiced against people with profound disabilities.

A social worker co-ordinating a staff team desperately trying to prevent a man severely damaging his remaining eye.

Not all our callers contact us about eye care. Our main role is dealing with enquiries about blind and partially sighted adults with learning difficulties and/or 'complex needs'. We get phone calls about anything - and so do RNIB children's services!

### **Denied eye care**

Children and young people of school age are more likely to have regular eye tests than adults. We are concerned that transitional plans include regular eye tests. It is disgraceful that many of the most vulnerable people in our society are denied health care which could radically improve their lives - and a terrible waste of resources.

We are often told about people in their 40s, 50s and 60s (or even older) who have never had an eye test. This means that some people were born with low vision but their sight problem was never identified. It is hard to imagine just how these people's lives might have been if their difficulties in seeing had been discovered at an early age.

*"Kirsty just sat. They thought she was profoundly disabled. At 47 they discovered she had low vision and that's why she was so reluctant to move by herself."*

We are also told of people who have been described as blind or partially sighted - but who have never had their vision assessed.

*"David was always labelled 'blind'. Wrongly. Wearing glasses has changed his life - he's so active and bright now, interested in everything"*

People with learning difficulties may be unusually long-sighted, short-sighted or astigmatic (when the front surface of the eye is more like a rugby ball in shape than a football, distorting the vision). Staff and families frequently assume that glasses will automatically be rejected, but there are ways of getting used to them.

*"We agonized about how to get Gordon to wear his new glasses, so we put them on him at break - when he normally grabbed all the biscuits. He immediately realised he could tell the difference between the oblong Bourbon creams and the round chocolate digestives; he accepted his glasses readily. He can now pick up biscuits one at a time"*

People with severe learning difficulties will wear glasses if there are obvious rewards for seeing, the glasses fit and they have been carefully introduced. Glasses which improve a person's hand/eye co-ordination are more likely to be accepted.

Each year brings enquiries about people whose sight has been damaged or lost unnecessarily. Perhaps no-one has noticed that a person has sore or red eyes or that his/her behaviour has dramatically changed.

Eye operations are increasingly available to adults with severe learning difficulties. Cataract surgery requires careful planning, especially the aftercare, but outcomes are nearly always worth the extra work. However sometimes staff and carers decide that surgery would be too traumatic - without considering all the options.

*"He developed problem behaviour when he went blind, stripping off his clothes and smearing faeces everywhere. He is distressed most of the time and upsets the others. Could an operation really have made it any worse for him?"*

We seldom hear of GPs refusing to refer people for operations now, but staff report 'problems with ophthalmologists' - and ask about second opinions.

*"The second ophthalmologist was interested and caring - unlike the first. He thought Jimmy should definitely have an operation, pointing out that it could not possibly spoil his already poor quality of life"*

I am also concerned about the lack of eye care for visually impaired people. Once someone is identified as blind, staff may believe they cannot benefit from eye tests. Additional sight loss may go undetected.

*"He had always found his way round the villa with his little bit of sight. Then he refused to move without help. As he was a middle-aged man with Down syndrome, we suspected dementia. We just didn't think of a blind person getting blinder"*

### **Eye tests**

Surveys consistently show that 40% of people with learning difficulties have eye problems. Yet Mencap's 1998 survey found only 47% of adults with learning difficulties had regular eye examinations/sight tests. While most people (of all levels of ability) need glasses by the age of 40, people with learning difficulties lose their focusing ability at an earlier age. They are also susceptible to all the eye conditions common in ageing - such as cataracts.

Every year people telephone RNIB and announce that it is impossible to test the sight of people with limited or no obvious means of communication. We know it is possible; optometrists and orthoptists have been assessing babies and young children for years. No-one is too disabled to have an eye test - but many people are denied their rights.

Callers to RNIB may assume that reading letters from a chart is the only way to test a person's level of vision. But there are tests which use pictures or which record a person's involuntary eye movements if he/she cannot co-operate. It may not be easy to find an optometrist with the skills to test the sight of people with limited communication. We have therefore produced a directory of 'volunteer' optometrists who are willing to help.

There is a growing awareness that eye tests can be strange frightening experiences - and that people may need careful preparation to avoid being frightened. One nurse commented:

*"At what other time in your life do you go into a small dark room with a total stranger, sit on a peculiar chair, have a light shone into your eyes, get some cold metal thing stuck on your nose and obey a whole range of instructions? Normally you'd say 'no thank you' and mean it"*

Most parts of the test can be practised in advance. While we were making our 'Right to Sight' video, we filmed Cohn visiting an optometry practice, sitting in the special chair and being introduced to the equipment. We also showed Margaret Wilkinson of Kent Association for the Blind getting people familiar with the different components of an eye test - having light shone into their eyes, tracking objects, scanning to find things, practising identifying and matching pictures.

### **Access to eye care campaign for adults with learning difficulties**

Our Campaign has been well supported by other organisations. I am on the College of Optometrists' working party, which is producing a video and training pack for optometrists on assessing children and adults with learning difficulties. Over 5,000 optometrists have expressed interest in receiving the pack.

There is a lot of work still to be done when one remembers that there are 530,000 children and adults with learning difficulties who do not have regular eye tests. They are at risk of having their lives undermined by eye problems. They need access to eye care.

### ***Right to sight - video and resource pack***

This pack is designed to help staff gain a better understanding of the eye care needs of adults with learning difficulties and how to support them in gaining access to eye tests, eye surgery, rehabilitation workers for visually impaired people and so on. The pack costs £89.00 including postage and packing.

### ***Focus Factsheets***

RNIB has seven Focus Factsheets in the 'eye care' range for adults with learning difficulties. If you would like single copies of them all free, ask for an 'eye care information pack'.

Access to eye care for adults with learning difficulties

Looking for eye problems in people with learning difficulties

How to get the best out of sight testing of adults with learning disabilities and/or no obvious means of communication

Glasses for adults with severe learning difficulties

Questions to ask the optometrist after a sight test of an adult with learning difficulties who has no obvious means of communication

Minimising problems in eye surgery for adults with severe learning difficulties

Low vision services for people with learning difficulties

RNIB also produces a range of Focus Factsheets and a newsletter, Focus, on work with blind and partially sighted adults with learning difficulties.

All Focus Factsheets are available in large print, braille or on disk or tape. They can also be found on our website: [www.rnib.org.uk/multdis](http://www.rnib.org.uk/multdis)

***Illustrated and taped booklets on eye care for adults with learning difficulties***

RNIB's new illustrated booklets for service users have been produced in large print.

*Getting your eyes tested* - explains in 'easy English' what to expect when you go into an optician's practice to get your eyes tested. The pictures show the different procedures.

*Getting new glasses* - aims to give people a better understanding of how glasses can help, and how to choose new glasses so that they fit well and are within your budget. The booklet also shows how to look after your glasses and keep them clean.

Customers ordering the booklets can also receive the tape to support the print copy with picture description and a tape for visually impaired people free. Alternatively, booklets and tapes can be ordered separately.

**Gill Levy**

Further information from Gill Levy at RNIB Multiple Disability Service, 224 Great Portland Street, London W1N 6AA Telephone 0171 388 1266 e-mail: glevy@mib.org.u

***SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP ON  
VISUAL IMPAIRMENT AND LEARNING DISABILITY***

In the November 1999 edition of *Focus* (RNIB's news letter for staff working with people with visual and learning disabilities), Gill Levy wrote a brief article entitled 'Special interest group (SIG) on visual impairment and learning disability'. This endeavoured to find out if there is sufficient interest to establish a group. The SIG would meet at different venues and address some of the issues that staff working with visually impaired people with learning disabilities commonly confront. As well as being a good opportunity to network, it would provide an ideal forum for staff who feel isolated in their work, or who simply wish to share ideas. The group is not intended to take the place of training.

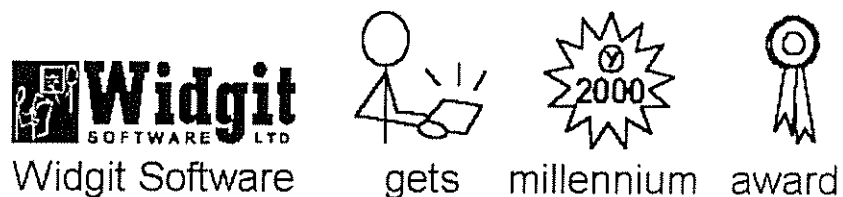
As the response was positive RNIB have booked two venues in different parts of the country, which are: Central London 6th October 2000 and Manchester 26th October 2000. It is anticipated that the groups will take place for part of the morning and afternoon with a break for lunch, for which there will be a nominal charge of £5.00 per person.

If you would like to book a place, have a particular topic of interest for the group, or would like further information, please contact: Karen Waters on 0171-388-1266 ext 2406

*news ..... news ..... news*



## Writing with Symbols 2000 becomes a Millennium Product



Writing with Symbol 2000 has been granted Millennium Product status. The Millennium Product Awards were launched in response to the Prime Minister's challenge to show that Britain is the creative powerhouse of the world. This award is given to the 2000 most innovative products developed in Britain today.

Writing with symbols 2000, developed in Leamington Spa by Widgit Software Ltd, gives access to writing for people who find text difficult. Quite simply you can type a word into the program and symbols appear on the page. So it is easy to make writing, such as recipes, accessible to non-readers.

Chris Abbott, research fellow of Kings College , London, writing in the Times Educational Supplement says "Symbols can unlock the door when nothing else has worked. Some parents are over the moon at pupils' progress."

According to directors Mike and Tina Detheridge "Writing with symbols 2000 is having a major impact in both education and social services. It is increasing access to information, autonomy and most importantly, self-expression."

"We're delighted to receive this award, it will help to focus on opportunities for people with learning disabilities both in the UK and in our export markets."  
(Tina Detheridge, director)

### Widgit Software Ltd.

10 Radford Road, Leamington Spa, CV31 1LF  
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# report back .....

## Co-Creating Communication

On Friday April 7th at Birmingham University there was a one day course, given by Anne Nafstad, on Co-Creating Communication: perspectives on diagnostic education for individuals who are congenitally deafblind and individuals whose impairments may have similar effects.

Anne Nafstad is an educational psychologist who works at the Skadalen Resource Centre for Special Education of the Hearing Impaired and the Deafblind in Oslo. She is a colleague of Inger Rodbroe, who was due to give the April 7th course but who was unable to attend at the last minute due to illness. Anne very kindly volunteered to give Inger's presentation.

Anne explained that their work is concerned with the formulation of a theory and practice for the development of communication by interpersonal co-creative relationships. She stated that it was an aim to formulate a specific theory for the development of individuals who are deafblind because currently available models of human development are not sufficiently 'parsimonious' to account for the development of someone who is congenitally deafblind.

The aim of the work is summarised in a statement from their book which illustrates a relevance to a far wider audience than those who work with individuals who are deafblind:

*"To be able to work with relationships, the partner has to be able to focus on his or her way of being together with the deafblind individual. We should no longer try to change the behaviour of the child or to interfere directly in the learning process of the child. On the contrary, we should contribute indirectly to support the child's learning process by creating non-distorted interactional conditions for learning and development" (Nafstad and Rodbroe, 1999, p19)*

To illustrate this, Anne presented the theoretical framework for interactions, and discussed concepts such as the co-regulation of intersubjectivity, and the co-regulation of exploration that both provide the basis for co-constructed communication.

Anne described two basic types of early intentional communication, the early declarative aspect of communication (the "look at this" "this is interesting" behaviours) along with the more familiar imperative function (the "give me" and "get me" behaviours). Early declarative communication skills still receive little attention - we might try comparing, for example, the amount of research literature on training, initial request behaviours by word, sign or symbol use - 'dinner' 'toilet' and 'biscuit' seem very popular with some researchers - with the amount of research there is on the proto-declarative point. It was encouraging to hear of the importance being placed on declarative communication, and to hear a description of a tactile equivalent of a proto-declarative, where the deafblind individual places the hand of the adult on an object of interest. These behaviours, Anne explained, are illustrations of the emergence of negotiated meaning. Anne and Inger's work has a direct relevance for everyone who spends time with individuals with communication difficulties.

As one example, Anne's discussion of co-created communication and shared meaning reminded me strongly of some of the anecdotes I have heard about the use of objects of reference, where objects are arbitrarily chosen by the teacher to represent activities or even National Curriculum subjects. How much classroom communication with individuals with complex needs is co-created and co-regulated? Since objects of reference have never yet been evaluated in the UK, perhaps Anne and Inger's material might provide a starting point for analysing this issue and changing our styles of communicative interactions. I am sure that using their approaches to analyse communication would be a thought-provoking and productive exercise.

Norman Brown, in summarising the day, said that it had been both challenging and very rewarding. Anne's use of theoretical terminology was refreshing and it was inspiring to listen to someone who did not want to dilute the contents or to talk down to an audience. As I had been asked to write review for the day, I spent some time in the lobby during the coffee breaks, studiously eavesdropping. The reactions were all positive. I heard one person say to her colleague "doesn't



she use lovely imagery!" A video sequence showed a deafblind child slowly and tentatively inching through a doorway, body turned very slightly to one side, with the right leg stretched forward with the tip of the big toe trailing the way across the floor. "Here" said Anne "it is clear that he is seeing with his big toe and the rest of his body is his peripheral vision." Beat that!

We all send Inger Rodbroe best wishes for a speedy recovery.

**Keith Park**

*Co-creating Communication: Perspectives on Diagnostic Education for Individuals Who Are Congenitally Deafblind and Individuals Whose Impairments May Have Similar Effects* (1999) by Anne Nafstad and Inger Rodbroe, is published by NUD (Nordic Staff Training Centre For Deafblind Services, Slotsgade 8, DK-933, Dronninglund, Denmark. Phone: 45988434 99; e-mail: nud@nud.dk

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## **Arts 2000? Where are the Arts now for children with Special Educational Needs?**

This conference was held on 25th March at Sunfield School for Children with Severe and Complex Learning Needs. The Aim of the conference was to spotlight the Arts in education for children with special educational needs, provide opportunities to explore practice and offer a forum for debate.

A variety of educational initiatives over the past decade have resulted in a contraction of the Arts in the curriculum. For children with special educational needs, the Arts - music, drama, dance and art - have long been regarded as major vehicles for structuring personal growth and development. The opportunities presented through these media were considered to be invaluable.

After a decade of uncertainty, what is the place of the Arts in a programme with SEN? Are they relevant or just a frill on a daily overloaded curriculum?

The day conference was divided into a Keynote Address, an afternoon lecture, and a series of workshops. This was followed by a lively plenary debate.

### **Main outcomes from the debate on issues raised during the conference**

It was recognised that:

Work focusing on the Arts needs to have support and value within the context of the National Curriculum in schools

Currently, the Arts are hampered by lack of recognition of their place within the National Curriculum; this has led to a lack of priority in available training, resources, etc., and caution about going outside the National Curriculum

There is a need for more training in the Arts for teachers; teachers welcomed this conference, and highlighted the need for other conferences and greater support from schools to attend; the conference gave 'a creative insight into how children can be provided with a challenge'

The Arts are a valid context for many other curriculum areas

The development of an assessment framework for the Arts is needed

Art is about process, not just about product

The role of Arts in contexts other than schools is important - they provide opportunities for life long learning

There is a need for a universally accessible communication base for the Arts in education, e.g. a website, which might list artists who can work in SEN settings

There is a need to develop stronger links between schools and Arts professionals and professional bodies

National publicity to support the role of the Arts in lifelong learning is needed.

**The keynote address:**

***Towards the long-legged fly: creative responses of children with learning difficulties*** - speaker: Dr Nicola Grove, City University, London

The keynote address focused on the question of how to conceptualise creative, artistic and affective responses across the range of ability, and the implications for our current models of progress in learning.

**The afternoon lecture:**

***Developing an Arts Pack for People with Profound Learning Disabilities***

speaker: Loretto Lambe, Profound and Multiple Impairment Service (PAM'S), University of Dundee

This lecture focused on discoveries that Loretto Lambe and Professor James Hogg (White Top Research Centre, University of Dundee) made, relating to current Arts opportunities for people with profound and multiple disabilities, while developing their resource pack, *Creative Arts and People with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities: education therapy and leisure*.

**Key issues developed during the lectures and workshops were as follows:**

***Arts through the senses***

speaker: Loretto Lambe, PAM'S, University of Dundee

The Arts need to include people with and without disabilities, as inspirators, creators, makers, and explorers in all Arts environments

There needs to be an identification and breaking down of boundaries which prevents a sharing of Arts experience between people with and without disabilities

We need to involve our communities in Arts by people with disabilities - both in sharing skills and in appreciation (e.g. local art galleries, businesses, craftspeople, lay people, etc.).

***Beat That***

speakers: Bobbie Stormont and Hillary Wainer; *Beat That!*, Oxon

The principles of African music which allow people to connect with their own innate musicality and to share this with others

What happens 'in the moment' rather than the achievement of predetermined outcomes

The challenge drumming presents to the prevailing perceptions of music as: (a) the province of the specialist, (b) hierarchic and (c) of generally low esteem within schooling

The quality of silence as an integral part of music making.

### ***Developing drama in children with autism***

*speaker: Melanie Peter; freelance Arts educator*

*Expression and communication:* understanding and use of a narrative for meaning; making creative choices within a broadening framework

*Understanding social constructs:* insights can be gained from manipulating the theatre form; transferring learning about life situations from the theatre to the real world.

*Affective experiences:* arouses the sense of self

### ***Creating spaces***

*speaker: Mike Fletcher; lead visual artist, Sunmoves Arts Project, Sunfleid; freelance landscape artist*

Becoming aware of space, the ways in which it is used by the people who move through it, and its potential in your environment

Sympathetic development of spaces

Real outcomes (slides of grounds development and practical exercises).

### ***Connection through movement***

*speaker: Isobel Jones; director; Salamander Tandem (sound, movement and performance company)*

Opportunities for meaningful participation in dance whatever a person's level of access

How to address issues of discomfort with contact

Ways to approach the people with whom we are working

The need for play.

### ***Art in the landscape***

*speaker: Jane Stoneham, director; The Sensory Trust*

Ways in which the outdoor environment can be made more accessible to children and people with disabilities

Features to avoid and how to create maximum effect within a restricted budget

Specific examples of solutions to grounds development supported by slides and available literature.

## **Music**

*speaker: Heather Wastie, freelance community musician*

The need to overcome fear of participating adult helpers by encouragement and example

The need to connect using music, the medium for engagement between teacher and pupil

The importance of recognising and developing the link between music and movement:  
music responding to movement and vice versa

Soundbeam as an excellent tool for fostering the link between music and movement.

## **Literature for all**

*speaker: Dr Nicola Grove, City University, London*

Using poetry across the range of ability

How to use multisensory approaches and script theory in exploring literature

Discussion of already adapted literature, including extracts from *Odyssey Now*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth in Mind*.

## **Sharing through movement**

*speaker: Peppy Hills, project leader and dance artist-in-residence, Sunmoves Arts Project, Sun freelance dance artist*

Creating movement experience is possible for all teachers whatever their level of expertise

Everyone can achieve at their own level, in their own space; dance empowers all - everyone's contribution is valuable.

Music is really important in shifting, maintaining and creating atmospheres.

Dance is communication which does not need words.

*If you would like further information about the Arts 2000?' Conference, please contact:  
Professor Barry Carpenter; Sunfield, Clent, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY9 9PB, UK  
Tel: 01562 882253; Fax: 01562 883856; Email: sunfield@sunfieldsch.u-net.cm*

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## Citizen Advocacy: Where Next

A good question. But as anyone familiar with citizen advocacy will know, not an easy one to answer.

Regardless of this, on 29th March over seventy brave souls set out to make the attempt at a working conference in London organised by the British Institute of Learning Disabilities. There was a good mix, with people coming not only from across Britain, but also Ireland and Belgium. The only disappointment was that not enough people with learning disabilities and their advocates came to tell us how it feels, as it were, from the horse's mouth. Their input is crucial, and we are looking at proactive ways of encouraging a greater presence at future events of this kind.

The scene for the conference was set by two strong keynote speeches.

**Christa Wiggins** spoke about the service provider and commissioner viewpoint on citizen advocacy. Christa was Assistant Director of Social Services for Oxfordshire County Council, and is currently seconded to the City and East London Health Authority and the Borough of Newham. She has been closely involved in ensuring that services for people with learning disabilities are properly responsive, and sees an important part for citizen advocacy to play in this.

She emphasised that while it would be inappropriate for citizen advocates and commissioners or providers of services to work closely together, it is good for service users if there is understanding and good communication between them. Commissioners need citizen advocates if they are to get things right. Quality in citizen advocacy is important, not least to protect vulnerable people against the effects of poor advocacy. But for Christa, the crucial question remains how to recruit and retain increasing numbers of citizen advocates.

**Dorothy Atkinson** gave a critical review of where citizen advocacy stands now. Dorothy is from the School of Health and Social Welfare at the Open University. Her comments were based on *Advocacy: A Review*, a report for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, of which she was author.

Dorothy looked at what makes advocacy work: trained and supported advocates who are aware and sensitive; good advocacy relationships; and an advocacy culture in society. She also examined what stops advocacy working: tensions within the movement; lack of a policy framework; lack of funding; and lack of national standards, guidelines for good practice, and training opportunities. She concluded that it is time that citizen advocacy moved centre stage. Otherwise it will fail the powerless, the excluded and the vulnerable.

Much of the rest of the day was taken up with group discussions. These were focused on four questions relating to quality issues. Debate was, to say the least, lively and creative. Suggestions for action made by the groups included:

- Identify existing good practice in citizen advocacy, and develop national guidelines from the grassroots up.
- Identify key questions over training and preparation of volunteers, and arrange opportunities for further discussion of this complex topic.
- Consult through existing national and regional bodies to find out what the citizen advocacy movement wants in terms of national guidelines.
- Pull existing advocacy networks together to produce a comprehensive national advocacy network including citizen advocacy, and put it on the internet.

The conference closed with a forthright and positive speech by John Hutton MP, Minister of State at the Department of Health. He made it clear that a lot of money is spent on services for people with learning disabilities, it is not always well spent, and he can no longer justify this. Quality of service is too widely variable. A hard look is being taken at how to get best value for money, and this includes the voluntary sector and citizen advocacy. A national strategy for learning disabilities is being developed which will involve people speaking up and the Government listening. Speaking up is the role of citizen advocacy, and the support of the movement in finding new approaches is looked for.

A full conference report, including easy to read sections will be out shortly and will be widely disseminated. If you are on the BILD Citizen Advocacy Project database, you will get a copy. If you are not, or are unsure, send your name and address to John Brooke, BILD, Wolverhampton Road, Kidderminster, DY10 3PP.



**Enhancing Quality of Life:  
a project to develop transitional  
programmes for people with  
profound and complex learning difficulties**



**Project Update: May 2000**

This has been a busy period for members of the Enhancing Quality of Life project team. We have now completed our surveys of patterns of current school and college based provision for students with profound and complex learning difficulties. The data from our questionnaires are now being analysed and we will provide a full summary of these findings in the journals - including the next issue of PMLD-Link, and in our own newsletter

The Enhancing Quality of Life team is growing and developing. Helen Hayhoe, Lecturer in Learning Support and Teacher Education at Richmond upon Thames College has been appointed as a Research and Development Officer to the project. Helen has an impressive background in both research and practice and will make a key contribution as the project focuses on action research in a small set of case study sites.

In order to identify these case study sites, the project team developed a long list of successful and innovative providers from information given in the questionnaire surveys. We have used application and selection procedures to prepare a short list of sites which team members are now visiting. From information gathered during these visits, we will identify four providers with whom we will be working in depth over the coming year. We will announce the outcomes of this process in our next newsletter.

If you wish to make contact with the project please use:

e-mail: [pin20@hermes.ac.uk](mailto:pin20@hermes.ac.uk)

Post: Mrs. Peggy Nunn  
Enhancing Quality of Life  
University of Cambridge School of Education  
Shaftesbury Road  
Cambridge CB2 2BX

**Please Remember .....**

to let us know if you have recently found any books or equipment, been on a course or found a source of information you think might be of interest to other people who work with or care for people with PMLD.

Send us details, and if it was a course, perhaps you could send in a brief write up about the contents to put into **report back**

## FUTURE FOCUS ..... Transitions

The theme of the next issue of PMLD-Link is *transitions*. Despite the complexities involved in inter-agency working, the staff of many schools and other professionals working for the statutory services and voluntary organisations have developed a range of good practice for supporting children and adults with PMLD and their parents and carers during times of transition. For these people the experience of transitions can be positive, but unfortunately, for many others the experiences are not so good. Positive outcomes depend upon careful planning by key professionals who strive to maintain good links and spend time in exchanging information. Too often, they are working beyond the remit of their job and good practice exists because of the personalities of the individuals concerned. Regretably, there are relatively few published examples of local authorities establishing agreed protocols for efficient joint planning and communication.

In the life of people with PMLD there will be a number of transitions from one education provider to another: at a young age they may have a place in an opportunity group at a child development centre or in some other pre-school setting; a large proportion will go to a special school before the age of five years; a substantial proportion may remain in the same special school until they transfer to Social Services day services after 19 years; and there will be significant points of transition thereafter. Many children may experience different special schools at the primary and secondary phases of education. Some students with PMLD will have the opportunity to access post-16 provision in colleges, but most will attend a discrete unit in their special school. A minority of children may even have some time in an ordinary school before transferring to a special school. A significant number of children may have to transfer to a residential school and adults may go to a residential college. The number and nature of these transitions varies greatly from one part of the country to another in line with wide variations in the range of provision which is accessible and available. Parents and carers need advice and need to know enough about the opportunities available and the child and young person has to be prepared for each transition. Staff of the receiving school or centre need information too. What do you do personally or what is done in your area to make objective information available before the time of transition?

Changes of service providers will occur within other agencies too. Usually between the ages of 16 and 19 years, there is a change from child health services to adult health services with resulting changes in key personnel. A similar split exists in Social Services directorates between adult services and child services. At each transition point there will be some new professional who will have to get to know the person with PMLD and often they can only get the information they need from the parents and carers. Typically, parents and carers have to deal with a range of professionals and they find that they often have to explain things over and over again as new professionals come into their lives. What provision and what patterns of inter-agency working has been developed in your area to iron out these problems?

Despite all of the professionals who may be involved in one way or another, there is much evidence that many parents and carers do not always get the information, support and counselling that they need. Parents experience the shock of the initial diagnosis and the quality of information and advice they

receive at this stage is crucial. Probably, they will need professionals to spend time with them to talk things through and help them to understand fully the implications of the diagnosis. They should be given information about the relevant voluntary organisations and parent support groups who can help them further. These needs do not diminish and they continue to exist throughout the school years and well into the adult years. Most parents and carers welcome advice about how they can best foster the development of communication, social interaction, mobility, leisure activities and the greatest degree of personal autonomy that is possible for the young person. Many just need encouragement and reassurance that they are doing the right things, but others will benefit from more substantive guidance. All need advice about the practical help that may be available to them from charitable bodies, the voluntary organisation and the statutory services and about completing applications for the various benefits. Again, the nature of these services and benefits changes as the child grows into adulthood. What is done in your area to identify their changing needs and ensure that they receive the practical help they require?

What about the children and adults with PMLD themselves? These times of transition can be a cause of great stress and dislocation for them too. Just a transfer from one class to the next within the same school can mean that a child with significant communication and learning difficulties has to become used to new people, new routines, a new room and so on. We all know how much greater are the changes when they have to move to a totally different place. How do you prepare them for these significant changes in their lives? How do you involve them in making decisions about their future lives? There is much good practice in developing their ability to provide them with real choices and options and helping them to communicate their needs and preferences. How do you respond to what they have to communicate when you are making plans on their behalf?

These issues, and others besides, have to be addressed if we are going to construct better and more effective frameworks of support. If you are a professional or voluntary worker - and you may be working with infants, young children, teenagers or adults - do share your knowledge about local practice with us all through PMLD-Link. If you are a parent or carer, your own experiences may provide useful pointers as well as salutary reminders about the problems which are typically encountered. This is an opportunity for you to share information about the provision and strategies which you have found successful and help others avoid the pitfalls which you have encountered.

**Rob Ashdown**  
St. Luke's School  
Scunthorpe



# reviews ... reviews ... reviews ... reviews

## *Taking Turns: Around Recreation and Leisure*

Bradley, A.  
BILD Publications 1999

It is refreshing to come across a pack such as this which not only places a high emphasis on the positive benefits of recreational activities for all - with or without learning disabilities, but also contains many useful ideas to get started.

The pack consists of three booklets. The first, entitled "You're On" is designed for use by people with learning disabilities, the second, entitled "Your Turn" is designed to be used by families and carers, whilst the third booklet entitled "Over to You" is designed for use by practitioners.

It is stated that the pack is not designed as a comprehensive guide to the subject of leisure and recreation, but more as an introduction and expansion to the concepts for people who have learning disabilities. This includes inclusion in leisure activities designed for all to use, as well as more specialised facilities and arrangements.

The booklets for families and practitioners contain much material which is duplicated, and it is not immediately clear why both are not contained in the one booklet. Both booklets' concluding section contains very useful lists of ideas, contact addresses (for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) and suggest further resource material.

'Your Turn' is sensitively written and includes such sections as why leisure is important, and working with others to increase fun and leisure activities. A particularly useful section acknowledges and addresses the barriers to participation for families. Some time is devoted to this before the section moves on to look at methods of dealing with such barriers and other people's expectations and attitudes, and then to consider the possibilities.

'Over to You' is written in a much more matter of fact manner, and as well as sections covering working with families and working together with people with learning disabilities, the sections also address such areas as facilitation, choice, empowerment and quality of life.

'You're On' is the slimmest of the booklets and does not contain the very useful concluding section contained in the other two booklets mentioned above. This booklet contains many more illustrations with writing being cut to a minimum. It should be possible for people unable to read the words to read the pictures instead. However a section which addresses family concerns would not be accessible in such a way.

This pack flags up a number of issues and discussion groups focusing in on recreational activities may well find the pack useful as an introduction. It raised a number of issues whilst leaving plenty of scope for adding in and building on in a group situation at a local level and for specific individuals.

A video containing numbered short examples of people with learning disabilities undertaking a variety of recreational activities would have been a useful addition in helping some to choose and demonstrate the possibilities, as would more examples within the pack of its use with people who have physical and profound learning disabilities.

This pack would be an invaluable resource for any library, school, college or organisation - be it a support, day or residential service. The pack is not age specific, although it is not aimed at younger children.

Di Foxwell

## RESOURCES

### NEW BOOKS

*Pupils with Learning Difficulties in Mainstream Schools* by Christina Tilstone, Penny Lacey, Jill Porter and Christopher Robertson published by David Fulton 1999.  
ISBN 1085346-586-0

*A Curriculum for Personal and Social Education* edited by Linda Otten published by David Fulton 1999.  
ISBN 1-85346-596-8

*Implementing the Literacy Hour for Pupils with Learning Difficulties* by Ann Berger, Jean Henderson and Denise Morris published by David Fulton 1999. ISBN 1-85436-615-8

*Implementing the National Numeracy Strategy for Pupils with Learning Difficulties* by Ann Berger, Denise Morris and Jane Portman published by David Fulton 2000.  
ISBN 1-85346-664-6

*Approaches to Teaching and Learning Including pupils with Learning Difficulties* by Ron Babbage, Richard Byers and Helen Redding published by David Fulton 1999.  
ISBN 1-85346-575-5

*Living with Loss: Helping people with learning disabilities cope with bereavement and loss* edited by Noelle Blackman published by Pavilion Publishing

*The Accessible Games Book* by Katie Marl published by Jessica Kingsley 1999  
ISBN 1-85302-380

*Fingers and Thumbs* by Roma Lear published by Butterworth Heinemann 1999.  
ISBN 0-7506-2524-4

*Switch into Action* produced and published by the National Association of Toy and Leisure Libraries 1999 Available from National Association of Toy and Leisure Libraries, 68 Churchway, London NW1 1LT, Tel: 020 7387 9592

*Questions to Ask the Optometrist* RNIB Leaflet for Carers available from RNIB Customer Services Tel: 0845 702 3153 Cost: 50p

### **Reviewed in this issue:**

*Taking Turns: Around Recreation and Leisure* by Alice Bradley, published by BILD Publications 1999

## COURSES AND CONFERENCES

### JUNE

- 6th Action for Leisure OPEN DAY  
Small Multisensory room; items to purchase; wide selection of toys, games and equipment; database of information; reference library of books, videos, journals and publications.  
Venue: Moreton Morrell campus, Warwickshire College  
Further details: Action for Leisure  
Tel: 01926 650195
- 6th and 7th Cultural Issues in Sexuality Work with People with Learning Disabilities  
Organised by: Consent  
Leader: Seema Malhotra  
Venue: Harperbury, Herts  
Further details: Consent  
Tel: 01923 670804/670793

- 10th Inclusive Games at Key Stages 1 and 2  
 A practical workshop for teachers and others involved in providing PE activities for children with a wide range of needs, designed to promote inclusion.  
 Leader: Bren Pointer  
 Venue: Hay Lane School, London NW9 0JY  
 Further details: Bren Pointer  
 78 Doyle Gardens, London NW10 3SR
- 12th and 13th Starting MOVE  
 Two-day Basic Provider course gives an overview of MOVE philosophy and will allow participants to start using the MOVE curriculum in their own school, centre or at home.  
 Organised by: MOVE Europe  
 Venue: Scotland  
 Further details: Move Europe  
 Tel: 01902 323066
- 12th to 20th A Practical Approach to Working with Young Children with Multi-Sensory Impairment  
 A series of 7 one day seminars on a wide variety of subjects including: Functional use of Vision; Hearing - assessment, aids, etc. development of movement and mobility skills; massage therapy; early communication skills, eating and drinking; specific skills and classroom management. Each day can be attended separately.  
 Organised by: Sense  
 Venue: Family Centre, Ealing, London  
 Leaders: Jo Franklin, Sue Evans, Mary Barber, David Brown, April Winstock, Lindy Wyman  
 Further details: Margaret Gomm  
 Tel: 020 8991 0513
- 13th and 14th Multisensory Environments Conference  
 Organised by: Concept Training  
 Venue: Ward Arms Hotel, Dudley  
 Leader: Flo Longhorn  
 Further details: Concept Training  
 Tel: 01524 832828
- 17th Funday at London Zoo  
 Face painting, live band and a 'meet and touch' session in the children's zoo. May different animals and lots of activities.  
 Venue: London Zoo  
 Further details: Education department  
 Tel: 020 7449 6551
- 19th Sherborne Movement Level 1  
 Organised by: Sunfield Professional Development Centre  
 Venue: Sunfield, Clent, W. Midlands  
 Further details: Jackie Wadlow  
 Tel: 01562 883183  
 e-mail: jswadlow@sufieldsch.u-net.com
- 22nd Post 16 Curriculum for MDVI pupils - learning for life after School  
 Organised by: RNIB  
 Venue: Leeds  
 Further details: RNIB EEC Yorkshire and Humber  
 Tel: 0113 274 8855
- 22nd Learning through touch  
 Organised by: RNIB Education and Employment Centre  
 Venue: London  
 Further details: Tel: 020 7388 1266

22nd Action for Leisure OPEN DAY  
Small Multi sensory room; items to purchase; toys, games and equipment;  
database of information; reference library of books, videos, journals and  
publications.  
Venue: Moreton Morrell Centre, Warwickshire  
Further details: Action for Leisure  
Tel: 01926 650195

23rd to 25th Meeting the Challenge: Challenging Behaviour and the Arts  
Workshops in: Arts Therapies  
Communication and interaction  
Relaxation and leisure  
Organised by: Special Music Courses  
Venue: Great Hucklow, Derbyshire  
Leaders: Dave Hewett, Angela Fenwick, Becky Hasnip  
Further details: Kate Baxter  
Tel: 0115 960 9528

28th RNIB Vision 2000 - Working in Partnership  
Products and services geared towards meeting the needs of blind and  
partially sighted people. Hands on demonstrations, consultations with  
specialists, debates and seminars  
Organised by : RNIB  
Venue: Kensington Town Hall, London W8  
Further details: Jennifer Makin or Anita Purwaha  
Tel: 020 7391 2272/020 7391 2333  
e-mail: jmakin@rnib.org.uk/apurwaha@rnib.org.uk

## JULY

4th Therapy in Schools: Problems, Policies and Good Practice  
Organised by: Forum on Learning Disability  
Venue: Royal Society of Medicine  
Further details: Emma Chaffin  
Tel: 0171 290 2988

4th ISEC 2000 : Including the Excluded :  
International Special Education Congress 2000  
An opportunity for people involved in special education from around the  
world to hear about best practice and new ideas, share knowledge and  
information in more practical ways, visit local facilities.  
Venue: University of Manchester  
Further details: Prof. Peter Mittler  
e-mail: isec@man.ac.uk  
or Congress Secretariat:  
Tel: 01942 608374

4th The Value of Markmaking  
The development and value of scribbles and marks. Understanding of the  
process of art rather than the end product.  
Organised by: roc  
Venue : Cross Street Centre, St. Albans  
Further details: roc  
Tel: 01923 663628

5th Support for Female Carers/Mothers of People with Learning Disabilities  
for female parents and carers only  
Organised by: Consent  
Leader: Seema Malhotra  
Venue: Harperbury, Herts  
Further Details: Consent  
Tel: 01923 670804/670793

- 7th Listening to Families. Talking to Families  
 Organised by: Sunfield Professional Development Centre  
 Venue: Sunfield, Clent, W. Midlands  
 Further details: Jackie Wadlow  
 Tel: 01562 883183  
 e-mail: jswadlow@sufieldsch.u-net.com
- 7th Sherborne Movement Level 2  
 Organised by: Sherborne Foundation  
 Venue: Heathermount School  
 Further details: Cyndi Hill  
 Tel: 0117 937 3647
- 10th and 11th Aromatherapy for People with Learning Disabilities  
 History, therapeutic properties of essential oils and practical exercises.  
 Organised by: roc  
 Venue: Cross Street Centre, St. Albans  
 Further details: roc  
 Tel: 01923 663628
- 15th Action for Leisure OPEN DAY  
 Small Multisensory room; items to purchase; wide selection of toys, games and equipment; database of information; reference library of books, videos, journals and publications.  
 Venue: Moreton Morrell campus, Warwickshire College  
 Further details: Action for Leisure  
 Tel: 01926 650195
- 18th Action for Leisure OPEN DAY  
 Small Multi sensory room; items to purchase; toys, games and equipment; database of information; reference library of books, videos, journals and publications.  
 Venue: Moreton Morrell Centre, Warwickshire  
 Further details: Action for Leisure  
 Tel: 01926 650195

## AUGUST

- 29th Managers' Responsibilities in Sexuality Work  
 for managers only  
 Organised by: Consent  
 Leader: Mike Hobson  
 Venue: Harperbury, Herts  
 Further details: Consent  
 Tel: 01923 670804/670793

## SEPTEMBER

- 5th and 6th Cultural Issues in Sexuality Work with People with Learning Disabilities  
 Organised by: Consent  
 Leader: Seema Malhotra  
 Venue: Harperbury, Herts  
 Further details: Consent  
 Tel: 01923 670804/670793
- 6th and 13th and 20th Exploring Sexuality Issues for People With Profound Learning Disabilities  
 Parts I, II and III)  
 Organised by: Consent  
 Leader: Christine Paparestis  
 Venue: Harperbury, Herts  
 Further details: Consent  
 Tel: 01923 670804/670793

- 2th Issues of HIV and People with Learning Disabilities  
 Organised by: Consent  
 Leader: Bryan Mellan  
 Venue: Harperbury, Herts  
 Further details: Consent  
 Tel: 01923 670804/670793
- 13th **bild** 2000 Conference: Our lives: Past, Present and Future!  
 A conference with people with learning disabilities, carers, staff  
 researchers, parents and families  
 Venue: Stakis Hotel, Blackpool  
 Further details: Liz Howells  
 Tel: 01562 850251
- 13th Independent Living 2000 Exhibition  
 to Exhibition of products and free specialised seminars  
 14th Venue: Wembley  
 Further details: Independent Living Bristol  
 Tel: 01275 831754
- 29th Riing O' Roses: Music and Movement in the Early Years  
 to Tuned percussion (melody and simple harmony on xylophones etc.  
 1st Oct. Movement and dance  
 Organised by: Special Music Courses  
 Venue: Great Hucklow, Derbyshire  
 Leaders Janet Sparkes and Penny Lacey  
 Further details: Kate Baxter  
 Tel: 0115 960 9528

## OCTOBER

- 6th RNIB Special Interest Groun on Visual Impairment and Learning Disability  
 To promote networking, address issues and provide a forum for discussion.  
 Organised by: RNIB  
 Venue: Central London  
 Further details: Karen Waters  
 Tel: 0207 388 1266 x 2406
- 6th Sherborne Movement Level 3  
 to Organised by: Sherborne Foundation  
 8th Venue: Heathermount  
 Further details: Cyndi Hill  
 Tel: 0117 937 3647
- 26th RNIB Special Interest Groun on Visual Impairment and Learning Disability  
 To promote networking, address issues and provide a forum for discussion.  
 Organised by: RNIB  
 Venue: Manchester  
 Further details: Karen Waters  
 Tel: 0207 388 1266 x 2406

## NOVEMBER

- 2nd SPECIAL NEEDS London  
 to Educational book and resources exhibition with wide range of seminars  
 4th Venue: Business Design Cewntre. Islington, London  
 Further details: The Publishers Association  
 Tel: 020 7565 7474  
 e-mail: mail@publishers.org.uk

13th and 14th Starting MOVE  
Two-day Basic Provider course gives an overview of MOVE philosophy and will allow participants to start using the MOVE curriculum in their own school, centre or at home.  
Organised by: MOVE Europe  
Venue: Scotland  
Further details: Move Europe  
Tel: 01902 323066

17th Sherborne Movement Level 1  
Organised by: Sherborne Foundation  
Venue: Heathermount School  
Further details: Cyndi Hill  
Tel: 0117 937 3647

Week beginning 20th November

Gentle Teaching with people with learning disabilities, especially those who may challenge

Leader: John McGee  
Organised by: roc  
Venue : Cross Street Centre, St. Albans  
Further details: roc  
Tel: 01923 663628

29th to 30th Independent Living 2000  
Products and free seminars  
Venue: Wembley  
Further details: Independent Living  
Tel: 01275 836465

## **LEARNING PACKS**

### Right to Sight

A training pack comprising a video and supporting booklet for staff working with adults with learning difficulties. It is part of the Access To Eye Care campaign. RNIB £89.00  
Available from: RNIB Customer Services tel: 0345-02 31 53 ref. PR11142

### Pathways to Citizen Advocacy

A set of 16 Units for use by citizen advocacy groups in preparing ordinary citizen to establish and build advocacy partnerships with people who have severe learning disabilities.

Produced by a BILD project supported by the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities and the Home Farm Trust.  
For further details contact BILD Distance Learning Department Tel: 01562 852942

## ***LONGER COURSES (with accreditation)***

### Interdisciplinary work with People with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities

A one year distance education 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), Post graduate diploma and Masters (level M)

University of Birmingham School of Education in conjunction with BILD

Further details: Linda Scott, tel: 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 Tel: 0121 627 2853

### Profound Learning Disability and Multi Sensory Impairments

Two year distance learning course combined with workshops.

For people who are involved with children and adults who have complex learning needs and sensory impairments.

Offered at three levels: Certificate, Advanced Diploma and Masters.\*

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

Further details: 0161 610 0149

e-mail: [jtioffice@rsd.manchester.btinternet.com](mailto:jtioffice@rsd.manchester.btinternet.com)

\* Bursaries are available for some Certificate and MSc students. Details available on application to Gill Parkinson, Programme Director, JTI Office, University of Manchester, c/o RSD, Stanley Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 6RQ

### **bild** Distance Learning Programme

These courses are aimed at direct care staff and first line managers working with children and adults with a learning disability. Accredited through the Open College Network at Level 2 or Level 3. Eligibility for BTEC Intermediate or BTEC Advanced Award: Working with People with a Learning Disability.

Courses include:

Positive Approaches to Challenging Behaviour

Ageing Matters: Pathways for Older People with a Learning Disability

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

Better Health: Improving Health Promotion and Health care for People with a Learning Disability

Further details: Tracey Tindell

Tel: 01562 850251 e-mail: [tracey@bild-res.demon.co.uk](mailto:tracey@bild-res.demon.co.uk)

or Lelsey Barcham

Tel: 01562 852942



# PMLD-Link

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\* NB *Overseas* rate: £12.00 (sterling only)  
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Ireland Co-ordinator, Rosaleen O'Halloran  
St. Mary's Hospital and Residential School  
Baldoyle, Dublin 13                      Tel: 832 3056

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Herefordshire HR9 5TL

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