

PMILD



LINK

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

Spring 2005

Communication

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

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

Views expressed by contributors to PMLD Link are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policies and opinions of the editorial team

GUEST EDITORIAL

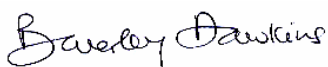
Spring 2005

Communication

The theme of this issue is communication and I am pleased to be able to introduce a collection of stimulating articles on this subject. Each brings a different perspective to this crucial area, including the use of Intensive Interaction, music, multimedia techniques and humour. All of these contributions demonstrate how far we have come in our knowledge, understanding and practice in working with people with the most complex communication impairments. What also stood out for me, was the diversity and creativity of the approaches that are being developed.

Communication is also explored here as a fundamental human right and the work that is being done to ensure that the 'voice' of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities is heard at all levels, from making every day choices to influencing national policy.

I hope you enjoy this issue.



Beverley Dawkins
National Officer for profound and multiple learning disabilities
Mencap

An apology. In Issue 49 the article entitled Rock a Bye Blues – Music as a tool for parents should have been attributed to Julie Wylie and Dr Foster Cohen, both from the Champion Centre in New Zealand.

The editor of the next PMLD LINK is Barry Carpenter

The copy date for all articles, information and news for the Summer issue is the 4th June 2005 and the focus is on 'Families & Carers'.

Articles can be long or short and they are welcomed from carers or professionals alike – we value YOUR experience and views. Please contact us if we can help you in any way. If you have any picture or photos to include we would love to see them (providing we have permissions).

Please send contributions to BarryC@sunfield.worcs.sch.uk or by post to Sunfield Clent Stourbridge Worcestershire DY9 9PB

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Articles, News, Reports, Letters Winter Vol. 17.3 Issue 52 Meaningful Engagement

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Future Focus: Communication

By Barry Carpenter

In this 'Future Focus' I would like to offer a challenge, which I hope will elicit some topical articles. We talk much about 'partnership with parents', but does it now have any substance? Is it an overworked and exhausted glib phrase with a hollow ring? And who was the partnership with? Parents (plural)? Or in reality mother?

The challenge I would like to offer is are we brave enough to shift the focus to partnership with families? For this is the greater reality for many of our children and adults with profound and multiple learning difficulties. They will find themselves engaged in play or leisure activities with a brother or sister: they may be fed by a grandparent, changed by a carer, pushed in the wheelchair by a family friend. And note that these last two people are not directly blood relatives, but rather part of (what I have termed) the self-defining family, (Carpenter, 2001).

Our families today face increasing demands as the nature, and number, of children with PMLD grows and diversifies. Improved diagnosis, better survival rates of pre-term infants (as shown in the EPICure study, www.nottingham.ac.uk/human-development/EPICure/) and a growing incidence of complex disabilities (e.g. Foetal Alcohol Syndrome: cf. Goswami, 2004), have resulted in a 62 per cent increase over the past 30 years in the number of disabled children living in the UK. In contrast, adult disability has risen just 22 per cent over the same period.

There are now 750,000 disabled children in the UK. Hopefully the vast majority find themselves loved and cared for by families who give endlessly of themselves. Theirs is a lifelong journey: our task is to give them unquestioning support to keep them strong as a family, to travel that journey.

So tell us, however briefly, of the projects you have in your schools, colleges, community, and other settings that support and sustain your families. Are there sibling schemes? Does your school encourage grandparent involvement? Have any of you used the new Family Service Plan which lies at the heart of the recently launched Early Support Programme?

Does our practice actually reflect that whilst parent involvement is crucial, in reality we have shifted our focus to partnership with families? We look forward to your contributions.



Barry Carpenter (Guest Editor: Summer Edition on 'Families and Carers')
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“Creative Conversations”

Making a Training Video on the use of Intensive Interaction to Communicate with People with Profound Learning Disability

Phoebe Caldwell

Intensive Interaction is an extremely successful way of communicating with a whole range of people with severe and profound learning disabilities but there are a number of problems associated with persuading Support Staff to put it to practice. Among issues such as Time Taken, Priorities, Age Appropriateness, is the idea that you have to be an “Expert” to do it.

Those of us who use Intensive interaction will be aware that we are all learners every time. The aim of “Creative Conversations”, a video to be published by Pavilion Publishers in early spring is not just to demonstrate the technique – but to also to show Support Staff and Family learning to engage with their Communication Partners through this approach. It follows a training video, 'Learning the Language' the main subject of which was working with a man with very severe Autism and Learning Disabilities although it also visited a service user with Sturge-Webber syndrome who was visually impaired.

Many people who have PMLD are locked into a world of their own. They may be listening to feedback as unnoticeable as their own breathing rhythm, or the sound of sucking their saliva. Intensive Interaction is an approach which tries to identify how it is that a person is talking to themselves through their inner sounds and sensations. To do this it looks at a person's body language and seeks to identify what it is that has meaning for them, what it is that their brain is likely to recognise as familiar. Observation is critical. What is this person actually doing as opposed to what do we think they ought to be doing.

Making such a film is fraught with a number of difficulties. Apart from the logistics of assembling all the people involved, Film Crew and Editor - Brighton, Trainers, - Lancaster and Kent, Support Staff and their Communication Partners on a day when all

their diaries coincided, there is the problem of permissions, limited time and cost - and with people with PMLD, the issue of health. Will everyone turn up? (Second session, Camera Crew two hours late sitting in a traffic jam on the M25 and potential partner with Cortical Blindness, unwell.) Having finally managed to meet, there is perhaps the most tricky aspect of all, in that there is no script, nor can be. We cannot tell our Partners what we want so once we start to film, we are walking into the unknown. 'Creative Conversations' covers both successes and those places where we did not get it right first time, since Intensive Interaction involves trial and error. In the end we have three sessions, one in Wales with a family, one in London in Day Centre and a final one where myself, Phoebe Caldwell and Pene Stevens, a senior nurse for Learning Disability and Mental Health Issues in Kent, who has been interested and involved in the approach for many years, discuss issues raised in the film.

St. Bernard's is a Centre with a number of service users with Cerebral Palsy and high dependency needs. Previously, they have received a day's workshop on using Intensive Interaction and have made some start on using it but this is the first time that have received hands on training. Here we filmed interactions between three people, Lyn, Evelyn and Neil, and their Support Staff supervised by myself. We also visit a family in Mid-Wales. Jemma who also has cerebral palsy, is supported by her sister, Maya Jordon.

Lynn has very high support needs. She makes sounds but these are usually of distress. Her communication partner has been using her name to call her. We combine this with her sounds. Our session with her brings up one of the difficulties of making film: anxiety as to whether the whole project would come together or fall apart, distracted my attention from an Absence Lynn had during the session. It was not until I looked at the video that I saw it. This omission highlighted for me something I am always trying to teach that in order to pay total attention to one's partner, we need somehow to empty ourselves of our own agenda. We must give our partner our total attention.

Lynn enjoys the session when Sarah replies to her sounds. At the same time, Sarah is comforting her arm. I suggest that she ceases this and sticks to sounds, as we need any responses we make, even if they were not in the same mode, to be specific to Lynn's utterances. In this way she will realise initiative and significant answers are linked. Once Lynn realises she will always get a response which has meaning for her, her pleasure increases and her sounds gets louder. The Manager comments that they never heard her laugh before.

Our second lady, Evelyn throws herself back as if she is rejecting communication but she does this when she is on her own. We do not try to use this as body language for communication as it appears to be part of a rhythmic, almost spasm movement. Although Evelyn's sounds seem the obvious way to communicate with her, she actually responds better when we use her hand movements, letting her take the lead as to whether we tap or clasp. She starts to smile, a sort of quiet but warm smile, as if she is sharing a joke with us.

Neil is very vocal and clearly longs to communicate. He makes lots of sounds and shakes his head vigorously. He is very excitable and it would have been easy for Annie and myself to fall into trap of joining in too strongly and hyping him up. Instead of answering his sounds exactly. I suggest we work with another part of his body language, which is banging his foot on his wheel chair.

When he knocks his foot, we reply by banging his table. He becomes more and more attentive until he is giving Tracy a prolonged gaze. If one is unused to such profound scrutiny, staff may find it difficult to sustain- it can go on for a long time.

Partners who are not sure how to receive it, may find themselves feeling awkward. We have to let go of ourselves and together with our partners, enter into what is known as a dyadic situation, (as in the infant/mother paradigm) which moves beyond sight to sensation. We have to consciously empty ourselves and allow our partners in. In such sharing, we not only give but receive, a process, which a student named as 'flow'.

Within the dyad, there is total attention, vulnerability, and profound respect for the partner as she is, simultaneous awareness of other and self within the partnership, tenderness and a flow of pure affect.

Speculation suggests that the surge of sensation associated with such bonding is linked to the hormone oxytocin, the 'feel good' hormone, which is also involved in infant-mother bonding. Oxytocin has the potential to reorganise brain function and moderate behavioural responses. The release of OT is associated with a reduction in anxiety. (Carter, C.S. (2003)

Developmental Consequences of Oxytocin. Physiology and Behaviour 79 pp. 383-397). Also I should go further and suggest that this is at least one of the factors involved in the positive changes in behaviour witnessed by those involved in Intensive Interaction. Support staff at St. Bernard's enjoy the level of responses they were getting from their partners. The Manager, Penny Medlock felt that the outcomes of the sessions were so positive that, together with her Management, she has decided to change the direction of the centre, so that communication between staff and service users (rather than task orientation) assumes primary importance.

Moving To Wales, Gemma, who is supported by her sister Maya, has very severe Cerebral Palsy, but is more able than the people we saw at St. Bernard's. I had introduced Maya to the idea of Intensive Interaction a few months earlier

and she and Gemma had used it since then. Like the people at St. Bernard's, this was the first time I had met and worked with Gemma and Maya together.

Gemma's primary communication is through eye pointing. She indicates left for 'no', right for 'yes'. This led to a conversation with Maya which highlighted for me the dual nature of communication, that is the distinction between 'Functional Language' and 'Emotional Access'.

Mostly when we talk about communication, we are thinking about letting each other know what we want, for example, 'a cup of tea'. If a person is eye pointing, Maya points out that this is very tiring, especially if one has Cerebral Palsy. It takes a long time and one may not hit on the vital question that will cover one's partner's need. But above all, it does not address our need to tell people

how we 'feel', which is like adding colour to a black and white perspective. But the use of body language for communication makes such enrichment possible. *How* people do their movements or make utterances, shows up immediately how they feel. In Gemma's family, Intensive Interaction has become part of a natural way they communicate together, even the four year old is adept. Finding Emotional Access has added a new dimension to all their lives. Using Interactive Interaction as part of a free flowing communication, all enjoy each other in a new way. Ending the film, Maya sums up. 'The difference that it's made in terms of Gemma's involvement with the family is that it's much more complete, richer in emotion, more dynamic, it's expanded everywhere, not just in the system (Intensive Interaction). She's much more articulate, more demanding. It's opened up the world for Gemma.'

Useful Books

Caldwell.P (1998) 'Person to Person: Establishing contact with people with profound learning disabilities and extra special needs', Pavilion

Caldwell.P (2000) 'You Don't Know what its like' Parkinson (Mainly about ASD), Pavilion

Caldwell.P (2004) 'Crossing the Minefield' (Mainly about ASD), Pavilion

Caldwell.P Training Video 'Learning the Language', Pavilion

Caldwell.P (2005) 'Creative Conversations' video, Pavilion

Nind, Melanie and Hewett, Dave. (2004) *A Practical Guide to Intensive Interaction*. BILD.

A Holistic Approach for children with Developmental Delay.

Study day to look at assessment of need and early intervention.

Date:-Thursday May 5th 2005.

Time:-8:45 - 4pm

Venue:-Room 7 Drove Centre. Drove School Swindon.

Application via Mrs. Sylvia Woodward 01793 614047

Cost £20 payable to Swindon and Marlborough NHS Trust.

Music sessions for a nursery class

By Pat Lloyd

Pat Lloyd, a music teacher and music therapist, leads musical sessions in the nursery class at Heritage House School, Buckinghamshire, and considers here how approaches to music can motivate and empower young children to communicate. She begins by considering how methods of work have been influenced by research into mother-infant interactions.

Much has been written on the links between early musical perception and the development of early communication skills. Research into the early stages of musical perception in infants has also led to recognition of the musical qualities of mother-infant interactions (Papousek and Papousek 1981). For example, differences in pitch in the mother's voice give a sing-song quality to the speech, and rhythmic patterns are produced by repeating words and phrases, the speed of which may be altered to build up anticipation in the infant. Trevarthen (1999) also regards musical development as inseparable from the development of



communication. He refers to evidence that certain features of melodies are likely to become familiar to infants more easily than others. For example, it has been shown that melodies based on the notes of a major triad (for example C, E and G in the key of C) are more easily recalled than those which are not based on an established key. Simple rhythms with elements of sequential repetition, using pitch levels within the octave starting from middle C, and simple melodies have all been shown to promote familiarity amongst infant listeners. Trevarthen comments that these features match the vocal patterns used intuitively in song-like play between parents and infants. Indeed the early interactions between parent and infant are seen as a form of play which uses vocal sound as the main medium. So research suggests that musical elements are an integral part of the development of early communication skills.

How can this understanding guide our practice in the nursery classroom in a special school for children with complex learning difficulties?

I have a combined role as both a music teacher and music therapist at Heritage House School, where our children have severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties, and some also have additional autistic spectrum disorders. I run music lessons for all classes, including the nursery class, and also see some individuals for music therapy (assessed against established criteria by which priorities are identified).

Good practice in a music session can take many forms, and may be run by a member of staff from one of a number of different professional backgrounds. However, it may well include the following features:

- Familiar structures and musical routines are established within which a child may learn to express recognition and anticipation. Usually a session is framed by a "Hello" and "Goodbye" song, perhaps with an object of reference used to reinforce a child's understanding of what is happening next (Ockleford 1998).
- Maximum opportunities are allowed for the individual child to initiate playful use of sound or musical patterns. As with other forms of play, it is the child-led element that gives real

value to such opportunities – and the child may well be most motivated by the sheer enjoyment of play! Response to their sounds assume that these were made intentionally, even if they were not! (Ware 1996)

- There are built-in pauses, during which children have time to express responses and for staff to identify and respond to these. Staff are therefore all involved and are working together towards the same goals. Individual responses and progress towards particular targets are recorded during or after sessions.
- It takes place in an environment which is free of other sounds, distractions and interruptions. (Not easy to ensure in a busy school environment!)
- There will be opportunities for children to express preferences between sounds, following exploration by touch or sound. Generally, higher quality instruments with greater resonance are really worth having, since they are likely to provoke greater interest and responsiveness (Flexer and Gans 1985; Zimmermann 1998).
- Attention is drawn to children's responses/ expression of mood and whenever possible, their responses influence how an activity develops. Songs are therefore most effective if they are used in a "flexible" way. (Lloyd 2003; Prevezer 1998)
- Songs may include much melodic and rhythmic repetition, in common with many nursery rhymes and familiar folk songs. These may well be used with unchanged or adapted words, perhaps including children's names (as found in current resource books for Early Years and Primary Education).
- The interpretation and development of a child's responsiveness during the session, hinges on the quality of relationships with familiar adults (whether this be a parent helper, therapist, learning support assistant or teacher).
- There is a wide variety of sounds used, with regular opportunities for children to explore sound-making in different ways, and also for them to experience the vibratory qualities of different sounds. Likewise it is worthwhile to vary the "texture" of sound-making, by sometimes having solos and at other times sound-making together.
- "Props" can be helpful in evoking responses to changes and in drawing attention of children to each other. One example is a song in which a child pulls a translucent scarf off their head, during a pause in the song, which continues after their face is revealed. This can help the child to develop anticipation of a musical "cue", and the silence of an expectant pause puts him/her in control of the timing of the resumption of the song. Prevezer (1998), Corke (2002) and Crosby (2002) all have many imaginative ideas – the possibilities are endless. (Changing the words of simple known songs can be a very useful start!)
- There is a sense of shared focus, so powerfully evoked by music, which has benefits for developing social awareness and responsiveness. This can be particularly valuable for children who have autistic spectrum disorders, and who may need to learn the function of communication and that it can be fun! (Frith 1989).
- The use of song is very important – even if children are not able to join in. It is not necessary to be a trained singer! Research shows that an unaccompanied singing voice is one of the most powerful tools for eliciting attention amongst the developmentally young (Glenn et al 1981).
- Activities are organized in such a way that a child may learn to anticipate when it is their turn. For example they are given time and encouragement to listen out for approaching instruments.

- The same principles could be used in different settings, such as at home in one-to one play between the child and a sibling or parent. For more ideas, parents could chat to staff at school, or look at Streeter's book on this subject (1993).
- Practice is informed by research.



None of these features could be seen as unusual and I am certain that there could be very many useful additions made to the list! Whatever activities are used in sessions, I find that it is the way they are used that is significant. Many of the features described above aim to reflect an emphasis on empowering children to influence outcomes – musical or otherwise. Responsiveness to music can be so valuable in providing motivation for the child to learn how to affect the responses of others. And in turn such learning is essential in promoting the ongoing development of communication.

In my experience the exciting research of the last twenty years has already led to great improvements in our understanding and approaches in this fascinating field of work. And with the benefits of future research, there is so much more that we may yet learn!

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This article first appeared in RNIB Eye Contact magazine (Autumn 2004) "Music" pp 22-23 and is reproduced with permission.

Multimedia profiling Courtesy of Viewpoint Magazine

Working with Acting Up, Mencap has been piloting multimedia profiling as a tool to help people with profound and multiple learning disabilities gain more control over their lives

Long ignored and under represented, people with profound and multiple learning disabilities remain one of the most excluded groups in society. Many go through life being offered little opportunity to be actively involved with decisions governing their life – about who supports them or where they live, for example – simply because they lack verbal or other widely used communication



Since Valuing People was published in 2001, little has changed for people with profound and multiple learning disabilities. The Government has accepted that more needs to be done and the Valuing People Support Team has begun introducing new measures, including the 'valuing everyone' guidance for Partnership Boards. This is. Recent research by the PMLD Network – made up of parents and professionals who work together to share good practice and bring about change – showed that only 29 out of 97 Partnership Boards surveyed had looked at how their plans for people with a learning disability could benefit people with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD).

Communication has been one of the biggest obstacle to the empowerment of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities. But this is where multimedia profiling – used as a communication tool – comes in. Using video, computers, photos, symbols and words, multimedia profiling gathers information about a person's life – how they live, what they like or dislike, anything that is important to that person – to help them communicate with others.

Profiling enables individuals to be fully involved using any method of communication, be it through facial expression, gestures, sound, body language or behaviour. This can be captured on film, put on a computer and then used to help people who provide support to gain a better understanding of an individual's needs and wishes. Photos and talking to people who know the person well can also help with this.

Multimedia profiling (MMP) has been successfully piloted by Mencap in North Yorkshire over the last 12 months. Across six sites, MMP has been used by people with PMLD to share information about themselves in review meetings, with new staff, supporters or professionals. The tool is gaining widespread recognition and support from across the learning disability field. Last October, Health Minister Stephen Ladyman visited the project in York to see for himself what a 'valuable contribution and difference' MMP is making to the empowerment of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities.

One woman who has been involved with MMP lost the opportunity to attend a day service as her health had deteriorated and staff at the day centre felt they could no longer support her in the way she needed at that time. Evidence film was gathered and shown at her review, resulting in her attending a day service designed around her needs. Through filming, the myths that had grown around her health needs were dispelled.

Sue Buckle, whose own experience as a support worker has helped drive the project forward, is the lead profiler for York.

Sue joined Mencap in 1993 as a care worker. Three years ago she began a service users' forum for people with profound and multiple learning disabilities. None had verbal communication skills. While running the forum, staff would tell Sue what they thought service users wanted, which left her with little idea of what the service users themselves wanted.



Sue voiced her concerns to the local Mencap district officer in York, who put her in touch with Beverley Dawkins, Mencap's national PMLD officer. Beverley was already exploring ways in which Mencap and others could better focus on the needs of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities. MMP stood out as a potential solution. "I wanted a way for us to meaningfully represent people with profound and multiple learning disabilities," says Beverley. "When I heard about the work John Ladle at Acting Up was doing, it felt like a positive way forward, with potential to do just that."

Acting Up, part of Matchbox Theatre Trust, has been working with people with communication difficulties since 1987. It has developed a range of multimedia communications training packages with much of the groundwork having been done by trainers, theatre professionals and people with profound and multiple learning disabilities.

"We were very interested to see a large organisation like Mencap wanting to take our work further," says John Ladle. "We both wanted to see a shift in resources and attitudes so that the balance would lie with service users. Communication through talking and writing excludes so many people. We have to take on the big issue of finding ways of really involving people. A change of approach should mean that outcomes are actually making changes to people's lives, that MMP is a working tool and not just an artistic exercise."

There are four major features to MMP:

1. Activities or events are documented.
2. These are then reviewed and shared with all the important people in the service user's life.
3. Parts are selected for the person's profile catalogue. This information (which is chosen by the service user) is shared to help with day to day and long term planning.
4. A MMP report is prepared. This can help represent a service user at review meetings or other settings.

"MMP could potentially change service requirements, empower individuals and become a really useful induction tool for new staff," says Sue Buckle. This is particularly important, she says, because of the generally high turnover of support staff, many of whom have not had any previous experience of working with people with a learning disability.



Buy-in from staff taking part in the pilot project was relatively easy to obtain.

Many had experienced the frustration of being unable to fully understand the needs of the people they were there to support, so were keen to try out new ideas. At the start of the project, Sue gave a three-hour presentation which included showing the *Tools for change* video, which explains how MMP works. "I show clips of

film then run a workshop which includes the use of laminated picture cut-outs. The service users can use these to point out their likes and dislikes. There is also a basic introduction to person centred planning and then we discuss which tenants might be suitable to profile.”



“We have learned a great deal during the pilot phase of the project, not least from the people with PMLD themselves,” says Beverley. “They have challenged our assumptions and attitudes and taught us all a great deal more about communication. We really hope to be able to develop this work so that many more people with profound and multiple learning disabilities can be included.”

The project is continuing its development in York. Those already trained in MMP are now training others already working with people with a learning disability, but in areas like person centred planning, for example.

The pilot phase is being evaluated by City University, who will produce a report by the end of February, and funding applications are being submitted to allow the project to be rolled out nationally.

Info

For more information, contact Beverley Dawkins on 020 7696 5558 or email: beverley.dawkins@mencap.org.uk.

Go to the new PMLD area on the Mencap website: www.mencap.org.uk/pmlD or Acting Up's website: www.acting-up.org.uk

For a factsheet on MMP go to: www.askmencap.info

‘Marie’

Marie Parker has been living in her current home in York for 11 years. Marie has no verbal communication but does use Makaton. She uses facial expressions to show pleasure or displeasure.

Sue Buckle, Marie's support worker and now MMP project manager for Mencap, started filming Marie three years ago and soon discovered lots of new things about her. “Marie wears lots of bracelets and watches but only has the use of one arm,” Sue explains. “Marie values her independence and because she is quite a private person, she doesn't like people going into her room.

“Marie wouldn't let anyone help her with the bracelets yet she was somehow managing to change them daily. Through filming, we discovered that Marie uses the arm of her wheelchair to manipulate movement of the bracelets.” Previously, in the absence of MMP, Marie's refusal to accept the help being offered her had been labelled ‘challenging behaviour’.

Another small but significant development was the discovery by staff that Marie liked to take sugar in her tea. For years Marie had been unable to communicate this to those around her, which made her increasingly frustrated.

Sue built a profile of Marie's skills and abilities by filming her over six months. Now, even if staff turnover is high, the multimedia profile helps to ensure that important information about Marie's life is kept on record. An added benefit is that a profile can be added to or updated at any time.

InterAACtion – Strategies for intentional and unintentional communicators

Karen Bloomberg, Denise West and Hilary Johnson

Government and non-government agencies throughout the world provide a range of different services for people with disabilities. Services often focus on meeting people's basic needs (shelter, food and safety). Although these are important, a satisfying life involves establishing connections with others and, in order to do this, we need to be able to communicate. We also need someone to communicate with and something to communicate about.

Over the past 10 years there has been a change in how communication intervention has been provided to people with complex communication needs. Previously speech pathologists were responsible for the assessment and management of communication programs. Often people were seen as patients or clients and "treated" in isolation.

There is now a recognition that this model of service is ineffective, costly and disempowering. This has led to a shift in focus with the move towards a community approach to service delivery.

The aim of a community approach is to enhance participation and maximise communication in everyday situations. The rights of the person with complex communication needs is a central consideration and the emphasis is on developing communication skills with communication partners alongside the person with complex communication needs.

People with complex communication needs have:

- 1) The right to express feelings
- 2) The right to be offered choices.
- 3) The right to reject
- 4) The right to be included in social interaction
- 5) The right to be listened to
- 6) The right to be communicated with in a dignified manner
- 7) The right to aids, services and resources
- 8) The right to have access to information
- 9) The right to request information
- 10) The right to understand communications
- 11) The right to learn about life
- 12) The right to learn about yourself

(Communication Bill of Rights, 1994 adapted from the National Joint Committee for the communicative needs of persons with severe disabilities (1992). Guidelines for Meeting the Communication Needs of Persons With Severe Disabilities. *ASHA*, 34(March, Supp. 7, 1-8.)

For the Bill of Rights to become a reality communication needs to be everyone's responsibility. We now work collaboratively where the focus is on supporting people to live in communities of their choice. This involves teaching others to broaden their concept of social interaction and communication with an understanding that all people benefit from a range of communication methods. Communication involves language and language includes sign and gesture, body language, facial expression, pictures, words and objects. We use speech on the phone, we use gesture to give directions, we share photos from our holidays and we write emails to other people around the world.

The InterAACtion package was designed for people who work with adults who have complex communication needs. These adults have little or no functional speech and limited communication. The package is composed of a manual and training video. It is the sequel to an assessment called The Triple C – Checklist of Communication Competencies.

The InterAACtion video (DVD) and manual provides information and resources to help people to become more effective

communication partners. The aim of the resources are to:

- develop communication strategies for people which make a difference;
- value each person's skills and abilities;
- assist people to be included in their local community and
- respect the many and varied styles of communication.

The InterAACtion Video/DVD shows adults who are intentional and unintentional communicators in real life scenarios. The communication strategies demonstrated are designed to match the person's skills and needs and can be easily incorporated into everyday activities. The scenarios are presented in the manual with accompanying work-sheets (also available for photocopying). The worksheets are designed to assist communication partners to learn to observe communication skills and needs, and make decisions about appropriate communication strategies.

The InterAACtion Manual provides a framework for introducing a variety of communication strategies to assist functional communication and extend or develop skills where appropriate. The manual contains over 30 individualised communication strategies as handouts that can be photocopied. The handouts include information about the strategy, who might use it, how to develop it, how to implement it and how to adapt it for people with different communication skills.

For more information, contact the Scope web-site in Australia
www.scopevic.org.au

Karen Bloomberg, Denise West and Hilary Johnson
Communication Resource Centre
830 Whitehorse Road
Box Hill. 3128.
Australia.

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Communication Quarterly, Winter, 10-11.

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held on

18 May 2005 in Belfast, Northern Ireland

19 May 2005 in Dublin, Ireland

The Sense of Humour Project

Marion Janner

1. Introduction

Humour at work is very trendy now, and we no longer need to get over-worried about age-appropriateness, when executive toys, serious play and office fun days are aching hip. Bright is a specialist communications charity and we're working with colleagues in learning disability organisations to explore how to bring more laughter and happiness into the lives of people with profound and multiple disabilities. Many individuals with this level of disability lead stimulating, enriched lives. Not quite at the pitch of the challenges set for celebrities in the jungle, but almost hyperactive compared to Homer Simpson. For other people, especially those in larger, more institutionalised homes, life can be fairly grey, with days and weeks relatively undifferentiated.

We're gathering a pile of ideas from other organisations, professional funny people, friends, Christmas crackers and particularly inspired wall graffiti. The following is taken from a feature on our website. The whole piece is available on www.brightplace.org.uk.

2. What's funny?

Analysing why things are funny is a bit like knowing that the tiger doesn't eat the magician because it's actually a hologram/pantomime tiger/stuffed dead thing. But at the risk of spoiling some of the fun, it can help to know what the main dynamics of humour are if we're trying to humour-up everyday activities. It boils down to a handful of techniques:

- Incongruity – the joy of the unexpected. Everything else is arguably a permutation of The Big Surprise.
- Juxtaposition. There's a piece of research out there with the title: *Balancing the right to habitation with the right to personal liberties: The rights of people with developmental disabilities to eat too many doughnuts and take a nap*
- Irony and its cousin satire. Sometimes reality is so bizarre that it's funny. (The President of America.) And sometimes it's so bizarre that it's definitely not funny. (The Iraq war.)
- Puns – and *Carry On* type double entendres.
- Exaggeration and understatement. Basil Fawlty and Polly
- Familiarity. Jackie Mason has delighted the Jewish community for years with his painfully accurate

renditions of our meshugas (follies).

3. Some fun and funny ideas

There are very few activities which can't be done on a paired basis – somebody with a disability and somebody without. It then just becomes a matter of finding some great activities. Here are a bunch that we particularly like.

a. At home

Games and activities

- funny board games – eg ones that are linked to TV shows.
- juggling
- skittles
- Twister

Cooking

- funny looking food, including funny designs (pizzas and of course cakes are great for creating humorous 'pictures')
- food with surprising tastes
- funny noises

TV, videos, DVDs...

There's a fantastic wealth of humorous films and watching them can be a brilliant social opportunity – not a substitute for being together. There's little to beat the joys of watching a hilarious film with pals and popcorn. And any TV programme can be

made accessible by augmenting sound and visuals with sensory direct contact. Every time that Bazil Fawlty hits Manuel, or Norman Wisdom falls over, a table can be hit, or a book can be dropped on the floor. TV watching doesn't take place in the British Library or St Paul's Cathedral, so it's great to encourage general whooping and copying particular scenes or phrases.

Executive toys

There's now a glorious range of 'executive toys' for the stressed and/or creative businessperson. Toys are the new toys. (Pardon?) Yup, toys are definitely where it's at for hip adults, as long as they are for ages 5 and over. The resources section has a list of great suppliers of fun stuff.

Poetry, music, drama....

All of the following can be made accessible and funny by camping it up – acting out the words, or sounds, and embellishing with extra movements and noises.

- funny poets – eg Benjamin Zephaniah, Ogden Nash, Spike Milligan
- Funny music – listening to and making – funny songs, funny instruments
- Sound tracks of laughter – eg the classic Laughing Policeman
- Funny faces – how about creating a photo book with photos of people pulling faces they definitely wouldn't want captured for their passport, perhaps because people are wearing comic wigs and holding obscure props.
- Making up a story - using cues from people, however indirectly suggested. For example, if someone waves their fingers staff have to incorporate the word fingers into the storyline. Or the colour of someone's shirt, the angle of their wheelchair...
- And of course the old favourite, charades, can be made very participatory by playing in pairs

b. Out and about

Almost any outing can be turned into a humorous occasion, if approached with the right (or sometimes the 'wrong!') attitude. There are of course intentionally funny:

- Films
- Plays
- Comedy clubs!!

Even though a person may not understand a film or comedy act which is heavily based on humorous language, just being among people who are laughing a lot can be funny and uplifting.

Given how much time many people spend in mini-buses going to and from day centres, it's worth considering humour on transport. The easiest way of creating this is to have funny tapes, but perhaps transport escorts could be recruited from among local stand-up comedians?!

c. visitors

- getting kids in to tell jokes, show funny pics etc - staff laugh in appreciation, humorous atmosphere is created
- some universities have entertainment troupes which put on shows for community groups. Cambridge for examples has CULES: <http://www.srcf.ucam.org/cules/>. There are also community poets, storytellers and musicians, some of whom will be hilarious. (Often intentionally.)
- faith communities – some are funnier than others and some branches of faith communities are keener on having a jolly time than others. But all are concerned about the well-being of their community members and will have congregants with cracking senses of humour.

4. Age appropriateness

Such a tricky one, this. On the one hand, virtually every adult enjoys books, TV programmes or games which are designed for people 30 years younger or older than they are. And, still on this hand, most people with profound and multiple disabilities enjoy kids' games and jokes which are less complex than ones for older people. But the other hand is troubled by the risks of doing anything child-like with adults, especially as adults with profound and multiple disabilities are penalised and restricted in so many ways by being often regarded as 'child-like'.

One safeish area is that of 'cross-over' – those things that can be played by kids or adults, or ideally by kids and adults

together. And it's possible to make kids' activities more appropriate for adults, eg by:

- changing names. No need to call a game 'peek-a-boo', given the association this has with babies. If it's someone's favourite, it can be called "Bob's game" (especially if that person is called Bob...), or The Surprise Game etc
- using adult equipment, including clothes (no bibs! Especially now that you can buy very smart napkin holders)

5. Making it happen

There needs to be a balance between consciously working at it and avoiding the happiness and spontaneity crushing "Come on everyone. You MUST have fun, laugh..." That said, how about:

- putting humour on the agenda for person centred planning i.e. having a 'what I find funny' section
- having humour as a teeny percentage of a service's annual budget. Or fundraising for this
- Including 'funny things in a services' community resources' files (eg local comedy clubs, funny occasions etc)
- Having monthly humour sessions or funny nights, partly as a way of introducing new people, eg neighbours. The easiest thing to do is show a funny video, but it could include any of the other ideas in this feature
- Making things more fun for staff, eg with:
 - fun training exercises
 - humour in conferences and other events
 - Recruiting (some!) carers from non-traditional sources, eg drama school
 - Staff training run by:
 - actors
 - clowns
 - comedians
 - Action for Leisure

6. Resources

Music. Many local areas have music groups who perform in care homes without a fee, for example www.pilgrimaires.plus.com

drama – including improvisation skills see www.the-spontaneity-shop.com

circus skills – fantastic fun to watch or participate in - www.thecircusspace.co.uk
design (for adaptation of games etc) – Remap has volunteer engineers and other craftspeople who design specialist adaptations for people with physical disabilities www.remap.org.uk

People

- professionals (i.e. fully-fledged actors etc)
- students – of drama, design, music etc
- people with learning disabilities as 'humourists' (members of the team)
- occupational therapists – is there nothing they can't convert, adapt or recreate? They're wonderful!

Books

- *Fun at Work* Dave Hemsath, Leslie Yerkes
- *Laugh and Learn: 95 Ways to Use Humor for More Effective Teaching and Training* Doni Tamblin
- *Playfair: Everybody's Guide to Noncompetitive Play* Matt Weinstein and Joel Goodman

Websites

There are a surprising number of companies producing resources and providing training to make workplaces more fun. Our favourite one is Bernie de Koven's www.deepfun.com which is an amazing, and generous source of ideas, resources and contacts. There's www.happiness.co.uk which is the British version of the American Humor Project – www.humorproject.com

Laughter yoga – sounds like a contradiction in terms: isn't yoga meant to be incredibly sedate and quiet? Not the way that laughter yogaists do it! Check out www.laughteryoga.co.uk

Pets

A great source of laughter and happiness for millions. Even if a group don't have their own pet, they can enjoy being with a cat,

dog or perhaps a weirder creature, thanks to the lovely Pets as Therapy charity. www.petsastherapy.org. And if somebody already has a dog but wants to have more fun with it, there's a great book, with photos which are as heart-warming to look at as they are to emulate. *97 Ways to Make Your Dog Smile* by Jenny Langbehn

Games, gadgets and toys

If you're looking for a basketball game for the bath, or a retro, energy-releasing Spacehopper, Hawkins Bazaar is the online or mail-order store for you.

www.hawkin.com

Other wonderful sources of fun and funny gadgets and gismos are:

- www.presentsdirect.com
- www.prezzybox.com
- www.iwantoneofthose.com

Training & Consultation.

Interactive communication training for anyone working with, for, or on behalf of people with learning disabilities and/or high support needs.

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Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

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The annual Carers Week carers survey is now being carried out.

The purpose of the survey is to update our knowledge, in advance of Carers Week (13-19 June), about carers experiences of juggling work and care, what support carers receive, how they view that support, and what changes might make a difference to their quality of life.

We have designed the survey so that it should only take a few minutes to complete; it is available online at: <http://www.carersuk.org/Newsandcampaigns/CarersWeek/2005survey>

Copies can also be ordered from this office (maximum 250). We would be very grateful if you could publicise and circulate the survey to carers you are in contact with, and also to other organisations and groups that support carers.

Many thanks for your assistance; please don't hesitate to contact me if you want any further information about the survey, or any aspect of Carers Week.

Best wishes
Paul Matz
Carers Week Manager

www.carersweek.org
Tel. 020 7566 7608
Mob. 07850 920899

Journeys Toward Communication

By Elizabeth A Henderson

It has long been established that the Speech and Language Therapist's place at Trinity Special School is in the classroom... and the dining room, the playground, the corridors, the soft play room, the toilets and the multi sensory room!

Since the 200 place school (Nursery to Further Education Provision) opened eight years ago, the Speech and Language Therapy team has developed, expanded and become an integral part of the establishment. Many of the successful initiatives which have become part of everyday practice at Trinity will be familiar to most Therapist / Teacher teams in Special schools across the country, but strong working relationships with education staff and other therapies together with flexible management and highly supportive funding arrangements have enabled the S< team to be creative with new ideas and schemes. One such initiative was the 'Sensory Journey' project.

'Sensory Journeys' at Trinity School originated from two strands of work being undertaken by the Specialist Speech and Language Therapist for PMLD about five years ago, and have now become a regular feature of the timetable for the forty pupils and students with PMLDs on role. They began in our Multi sensory room but were in fact born out of a combination of two other developing areas being driven by the S< department:

Firstly, the increased awareness and use of suitable sensory story telling and differentiated adaptation of texts, in both Primary and Secondary phases, so that pupils and students with PMLDs were being regularly and appropriately included in (and benefiting from) Literacy / English lessons. Across the school, the means of making stories a real and shared experience for pupils with PMLDs were being developed and provided, and literature was being used to develop levels of engagement and social interaction skills.

Secondly, the extensive work already being carried out in the Multi sensory room with

individual pupils and small groups, specifically targeting pre verbal communication skills.

'Sensory Journeys' revolve around a theme or story idea (often curriculum linked) and use elements of sensory story telling (tactile, olfactory, gustatory, auditory, visual, kinaesthetic cues) but without a constant verbal narrative. Being designed for those with PMLDs, the spoken language used during the session is kept to an absolute minimum. Instead, the session is usually linked and progressed by a musical sequence, selected from a wide range of styles and genres.

Each piece of music is coordinated with corresponding sensory items (which are offered to the pupils), and with appropriate sound and / or lighting effects. The use of a multi sensory environment gives optimum scope for contrasts of dark vs. light, silent vs. loud and many linked audiovisual effects, so that the combinations available are limited more by one's imagination than by the equipment (although a generous and ongoing budget is much appreciated!)

Table 1 describes in detail the various elements which were combined in 'The Aquatic Journey' (whilst surfing, pupils are caught in a storm and fall into the sea where they experience several different 'depths' before being washed up on a beach). The need to avoid an overload of sensory information has always been foremost in planning, and in some instances, it is the contrast between one section and the next which provides the stimulus to which pupils respond.

Pupils participate once or twice a week for a series of six to eight sessions in a small familiar group and (ideally) are paired one to one with an adult supporter, whenever possible. A facilitator is responsible for changing the room effects and ensuring that sensory items are available as needed. The adult partner is

Music:	Room Audio / Visual Effects:	Sensory Stimuli presented:
Surfm USA <i>Beach boys</i>	Bubbles and lights	Surfing actions and movements
Mars (The Planets) <i>Hoist</i>	Mirror ball and spot light	Wind and water spray (storm)
Ocean song <i>Jon Anderson</i>		Rolling and sinking
Liddenbrook <i>Rik Wakeman</i>	Bubble tubes	Toy fish
Echoes <i>Pink Floyd</i>	Sound responsive light panel (room in total darkness except for occasional light from panel corresponding to single note of music)	Listening
Sailing the 7 seas <i>OMD</i>	UV	White fish shapes and UV bubbles
Seahorses <i>Rik Wakeman</i>	Fish projection onto wall	
Wanton song <i>Led Zeppelin</i>	Mirror ball and spot light	Wind and water spray (storm)
Down by the seaside <i>Led Zeppelin</i>	Bubble tubes	Sea shells (beach)
Orinoco Flow <i>Enya</i>		Chill out
I'll find my way home <i>Jon and Vangelis</i>	Dim	Chilling out (staff and pupils) (this track is used at the end of every Sensory Journey throughout the school to enable anticipation of the end of the session. At the end, facilitator counts 1 -10 as all effects turned off)

Table 1: The Aquatic Journey

responsible for offering relevant sensory items, cues and artefacts to the pupil as the music changes and progresses and enabling / supporting physical movements such as rocking or 'surfing'. Elements of turn taking and, consequently, anticipation / awareness of others are introduced (for example when the wind blows, the facilitator moves around the room, fanning each pupil with a large board one at a time). The adult partner notes the pupil's behaviours and communication attempts, interpreting and / or responding as appropriate.

This approach to the use of the Multi sensory room combines several theories as described by Hirstwood & Smith (1996) and Pagliano (1998). It is directed and planned, but with the intention that the session will

provide a process or medium during and about which the pupil can purposefully engage with people and / or objects. There is no reliance on spoken language, so all participants (adults, PMLD pupils and more able pupils) are able to share and be involved equally, making Sensory Journeys an ideal opportunity for inclusion. Pupils' reactions and responses are individually recorded after each session, in order to monitor progress, and inform continuous assessment and target setting. Evidence of standard pre verbal skills (eg: turn taking, eye contact, anticipation, contingency awareness) are noted in general terms and purposeful or non purposeful interaction is also documented. Object, person and event engagement are recorded in terms of the

five levels of engagement described by Bunning (1996) – Orientation, Responsiveness, Reciprocation, Initiative and Association.

Through careful documentation it has been possible to chart real progress in pupils with a wide range of ages, difficulties and abilities. For example, several pupils who previously gained little from the multi sensory room, due to constant non-purposeful adaptive behaviour (such as rocking, constant loud vocalisations or self biting) became more aware of the surroundings and began to respond to their adult partner (person engagement) and to the sensory items presented (object engagement) and in one case to reciprocate by taking turns.

It has also been noted that staff have benefited from participating in 'Sensory Journeys'. The close observations and interpretation of pupil responses which are required, as well as the need to facilitate, whilst allowing the child to lead the interaction, has led to more meaningful and

child led communication in the classrooms. The approach used during 'Sensory Journeys' has also reinforced effective use of the 'Affective Communication Assessment' (Coupe O'Kane and Goldbart, 1998) for evaluation and target setting with all PMLD pupils and students.

'Sensory Journeys' are popular with staff and pupils alike and have gradually been adopted and adapted by various members of staff, thus continuing to develop and meet the changing needs of both pupils and curriculum. It is impossible to really describe the atmosphere or powerful communication which develops during a 'Sensory Journey' in words or on paper, but suffice it to say that I have seen more than one adult moved to tears during their first experience and I hope that this article might have inspired others to go on a Sensory Journey of their own.

Elizabeth A Henderson, Specialist Speech & Language Therapist, Trinity School

References

Pagliano (1999) *Multisensory Environments*. London: David Fulton Publishers; Pagliano (2001) *Using a Multi Sensory Environment – A Practical Guide for Teachers*. London: David Fulton Publishers; Coupe O'Kane & Goldbart (1998) *Communication Before Speech - Development and Assessment*. London: David Fulton Publishers

Supporting Older Families: Making a Real Difference

15th March 2005 in London

An event aimed at

- Members of Partnership Boards (Learning Disability and Older People)
- Anyone working with older families
- Older family carers wishing to find out how their local area could be supporting older families

This event will showcase good practice that is already happening across the country and give you a chance to influence the messages that are being fed to key policymakers representing older people, people with learning disabilities and carers.

All attendees will receive a copy of the resource pack produced by the OFCI

- Supporting Older Families: Making a Real Difference -giving Partnership Boards and older families a clear direction to take work forward.

For further details and a booking form please visit www.choiceforum.org/olderfamilies2.pdf (PDF file 65Kb)

The Total Communication Network

A national initiative from the Learning Disability Task Force, Valuing People and Mencap

Liz Stone

The ability to communicate, to be listened to and understood is central to our experience as humans. If our communication is not valued and understood we become isolated, frustrated and disenfranchised.

Derek is in his 50s and has multiple and profound learning disabilities. The area where he lives has an active and enthusiastic approach to person centred planning.

The lead group on the Partnership Board on person centred planning organised an awareness day. The day was open to people with a learning disability and their families. Derek "chose" to take part in a session looking at beginning to express your preferences about how you liked to spend your time.

The session was lead by people with and with out learning disabilities and used signing, video, photographs, pictures and symbols to support communication. The main tool used for people to express choices was Talking Mats™.

Derek was positioned in front of a mat with a wide range of images to choose from, using photos of local places, symbols and drawings. There were also magazines and additional symbols for people to choose from, as well as paper for drawing.

At the end of the session, not a single one of Derek's choices had been recorded on the mat. It looked like Derek couldn't make choices, or if he could, he couldn't communicate them.

In fact, Derek made many choices. He was very clear about things he liked to do - going to the pub, spending time in his room, being with people, eating out, watching the local football team. He was equally clear about the things he disliked - being alone for long

periods, watching the TV and being messy. He used eye pointing and head turning to communicate and reached towards pictures of things he particularly enjoyed, like the local football club.

An agency worker supported him on the day. She and Derek had not met before. This must have been the problem! She didn't know how Derek communicated.

Derek's friend Joan also went along to the session. A member of staff who had known Derek and Joan for many years supported her. She sat next to Derek.

The home where Derek and been living for over 5 years had no idea that Derek used eye pointing or head movements. They did know he reached for things, but thought it was just random and didn't mean much. In many ways, the support Derek got at home was good. He had a varied life and was present in his community. What he didn't have was any control or choice because no one understood his communication.

The aim of the Total Communication Network is to raise awareness of the communication skills and needs of people like Derek.

The Network will bring together therapists, professionals, product and equipment specialists, people with a learning disability, signers, teachers, supporters, agencies, organisations, in fact anyone who is enthusiastic about and involved in communication with children, young people and adults with a learning disability.

The Network will be a place to share good practice, solve problems, swap tools and ideas and work together to raise the understanding of how people with a learning disability communicate and how they can be heard. The Network will look at the barriers to and opportunities for all children and adults with a learning disability to communicate and be understood.

The Network is holding its first meetings on Tuesday April 12th 2005. There will be a meeting in each of the Valuing People regions and Mencap will host it. The Network will link to "Let's Communicate" in Northern Ireland, as well as people and initiatives in Wales and Scotland. Put the date in your diary!

If you would like to receive the agenda and details for these first meetings, please send an email to liz.stone@Mencap.org.uk and title it "National Communication Network". You will get a reply acknowledging receipt

of your mail and more information about the regional meeting by the end of March 2005.

There won't be a fancy lunch in a posh venue - you'll need to bring your own sandwiches. What there will be is an opportunity to develop an effective and active community of people who want to create change and opportunities for good communication for people with a learning disability.

"The right to communicate is a fundamental and inclusive human right; it is both a

- natural right of the human person and a
- prerequisite for the exercise for other human rights

This fundamental right enriches the cultural heritage of humankind"

The Right To Communicate
www.righttocommunicate.org



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By the end of the day, participants will have:

harnessed the creative talents of the unique Oily Cart Theatre Company with the specialist teaching skills of EQUALS to promote, inspire, develop and enrich learning opportunities for pupils and students with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

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Cost: NonResidential-£230.00 exe VAT, £260.00 non members exe VAT

SUPPORTING COMMUNICATION THROUGH AAC

By Richard Walter

This is a package consisting of 12 modules, in which we have tried to share all that we know about supporting communication through AAC. It can be freely downloaded from <http://www.scope.org.uk/education/aac.shtml>

This first article describes the overall structure of the package and outlines the different modules. In the next edition of PMLD link I will go into more specific detail on Module 9 “Children and adults with Profound and multiple difficulties”.

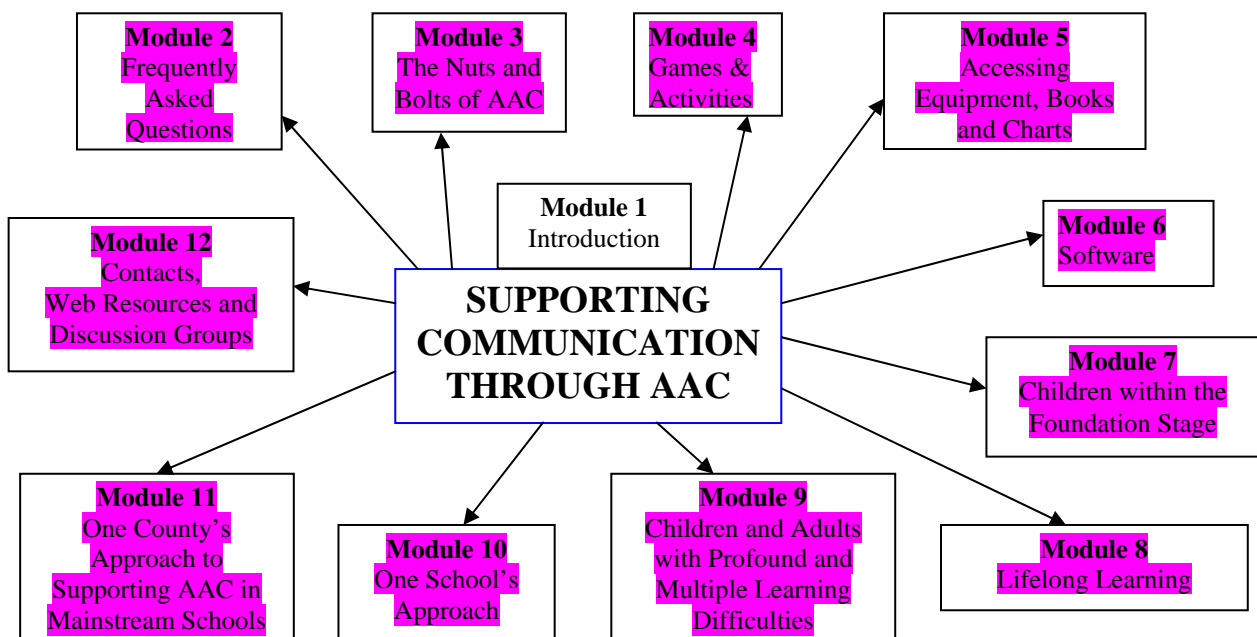
The package was the brainchild of Gillian Hazell of Scope who brought together the team who created the package. Janet Larcher acted as editor of the package. These people were members of the team who generously gave their knowledge and experience to creating this package:

Sally Conner – Ingfield Manor School, Billingshurst
 Janet Larcher – Independent consultant (editor of the package)
 Clare Latham – ACE Centre, Oxford
 Janet Lesley – Dame Hannah Rogers School, Ivybridge
 Ann Miles – Redway School, Milton Keynes
 Gillian Hazell – Communication Aids project, Scope
 Wendy Newton – Meldreth Manor School, Meldreth
 Richard Walter – Meldreth Manor School, Meldreth

We are very grateful to other people who shared their knowledge on specific items:
 Kate Holloway – Physical Impairment and Medical Support Services, Somerset
 Tony Jones – Liberator Ltd.
 Sally Millar – Call Centre, Edinburgh
 Janet Trebilcock – Penhurst School, Chipping Norton

We anticipate that people will dip in and out of it to answer queries, read what someone else thinks about a topic, learn about a new aspect of AAC - we do not anticipate anyone reading it from cover to cover!

Funding for the project to write Supporting Communication through AAC came from the Small Programmes Fund (Department for Education and Skills – DfES).



Structure of the Package

The package consists of 12 modules. The spider diagram below may help you get a picture of the scope of Supporting Communication through AAC.

Each module stands alone and addresses a specific topic or a particular group of users. However, each module is cross-referenced.

In more detail the modules are:

Module 1 : Introduction

Module 2: Frequently Asked Questions is our attempt at answering many of the questions we are asked as part of our work.

Module 3: The Nuts and Bolts of AAC is where you will find most of the information that you would expect in this package, although all the other modules cover issues that are essential to the successful introduction and use of AAC.

Module 4: Games and Activities provides lots of ideas on ways of introducing and teaching someone to use AAC. It is not easy to learn a second language, which is what AAC is, and unless it's fun and quickly successful in helping the user to control their lives and achieve what they want, they will give up or at a minimum not give it the effort it requires.

Module 5: Accessing Equipment, Books and Charts Without the means of quick and easy access to the resources provided they will remain unused or be sources of frustration. This module gives lots of ideas that will help you to ensure that the user's access to their system is as easy as possible.

Module 6: Software. This is a broad ranging module which provides information on curriculum access and word processing as well as software to support communication and to make professional looking resources quickly and easily.

The next three modules provide curricula to assist in developing the communication abilities of people who will benefit from using AAC, whether they are developing normally other than their ability to communicate through speech, or have additional physical and sensory difficulties:

- **Module 7: Children within the Foundation Stage** is focused on the needs of the child in early years environments.
- **Module 8: Lifelong Learning** is looking at supporting the communication skills of children and adults from when they leave early years settings onwards throughout the development of their skills to become efficient and effective communicators. This is based on "The Core Curriculum" published by SCOPE.
- **Module 9: Children and Adults with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties** is focused on the needs of this population. It consists of 4 Sections:
 1. Child version
 2. Adult version (post 16 upwards).
 3. Activities
 4. Access progression for switch use for IT

Sections 1 and 2

The basic structure of both versions is the same, but some of the terminology and examples are different to suit the different age groups and the contexts in which they will be working.

These contain two versions of the following:

Unit 1 P-Levels (child version)

Unit 2	Assessment chart
Unit 3	Assessment form
Unit 4	Assessment summary form
Unit 5	Aims and objectives

The assessment is based on the 'Early Communication Assessment', published in 'Communication before Speech' (Coup and Goldbart 1998) and assesses communicative behaviours e.g. visual and auditory behaviours, cognition, comprehension in context, organisation of communication and use of communication. The behaviours are broken down into developmental levels corresponding to the QCA performance descriptors P-levels 1-5 and the Milestone Levels for post 16 year olds.

Within each p-level (child version), or milestone (adult version), there is a set of aims and objectives for communication, including the development of AAC and ICT skills, from which appropriate IEP or ILP goals can be set.

Section 3. Activities:

This section contains the Activity Framework and sample Activities.

- The activity framework provides guidelines for practitioners on supporting individuals in achieving their objectives within the context of their everyday environment, whether it be school, college or daily living environment. The Activity framework includes brief guidelines on setting the 'total communication environment', 'facilitator skills', tools, aims/objectives,

Section 4. Access progression for switch use for IT

This is a sample of an access progression used in a school for children and young people (including post 16 years of age). The school provides an education for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties. A chart gives an outline of ICT Access levels, including the facilitators role, low tech and high tech AAC systems in relation to the QCA performance indicators (p-scales).

Module 10: One School's Approach provides an insight into how the development of the communication skills of children who attend Ingfield Manor School has been addressed. Their school curriculum and the structure of the communication books used are discussed and illustrated in detail.

Module 11: One County's Approach to Supporting AAC in Mainstream Schools. Somerset Local Education Authority has developed a county-wide policy to ensure that children with communication difficulties are fully integrated within county schools and are receiving the best services that the county can support. One of their speech and language therapists has written about the development and practice of this policy.

Module 12: Contacts, Web Resources and Discussion Groups provides suggestions of where to go for further help, information and discussion.

Whether you are someone who uses AAC, a parent, carer, student, therapist or teacher, we hope that you will find within this package the information or ideas that you are seeking.

Helping someone with communication difficulties to become an effective communicator is challenging, time consuming, and at times frustrating, but when all is going well it is also exhilarating. Remember those moments of exhilaration and make sure that the person using AAC experiences as much success and excitement as possible. A good motto for achieving this goal is to keep all activities FUN and FUNCTIONAL.

Whether you are someone who uses AAC, a parent, carer, student, therapist or teacher, we hope that you will find within this package the information or ideas that you are seeking.

To view the complete document see: <http://www.scope.org.uk/education/aac.shtml>

INTERCONNECTIONS ELECTRONIC BULLETIN ABOUT CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES / SEN

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1. About this Electronic Bulletin

It comes from me, Peter Limbrick, in Interconnections. I am an independent consultant to statutory services in the field of babies and children with disabilities / SEN. I specialise in children with multiple / complex needs and have developed the Team-around-the-Child model for supporting children and their families.

The Electronic Bulletin goes free to over 3,700 people in all parts of the UK and Ireland and then finds its way into many other networks and countries. The Interconnections electronic address list includes people from health, education and social services, the voluntary and private sectors, parent organisations, research organisations, campaign offices, etc. People who receive the bulletin are welcome to forward it to their own colleagues and networks and to use the information in newsletters and bulletins as long as the Interconnections electronic bulletin is acknowledged.

If you would like a copy of INTERCONNECTIONS ELECTRONIC BULLETIN

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Interconnections
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E-mail: interconnections.services@virgin.net

2005 Conferences

“Exploring the Benefits of a Multi-Sensory Approach”

8th & 9th October 2005, Birmingham

This conference will increase awareness of sensory integration and sensory processing difficulties. Delegates will learn how to develop a multi-sensory approach and will share good practice with like minded people.

“Positive Strategies for Behaviour that Challenges”

21st & 22nd November, London

This 2 day conference is a must for anyone working with people who present difficult behaviours as a result of a learning disability or Autism

Risky, At Risk, or Put at Risk

Kim Scarborough
Senior Lecturer University of the West of England

Kemshall (2002:1) argues that we live in a time that is dominated by “a peculiarly defensive attitude to risk” resulting in a culture of safety. But how true is this when it comes to risk in the lives of people who have PMLD? Surely any group of professionals eager to avoid litigation would ensure their most vulnerable clients are safe. Are people with PMLD living in a culture of safety where risk is well identified, assessed and managed?

I have been involved with the identification and management of risk as both a professional and a family member. What was very obvious was that my idea of risk and my sister’s ideas of risk were very different. This resulted in us approaching risk from different viewpoints and I often felt we did not really understand where each other was coming from. This led to research aimed at identifying what these differences were, what they could mean to professionals and how we could harmonise differing notions of risk so that professionals and family carers could work more closely, bettering the lives of people who have PMLD.

What are we talking about when we use the word risk?

‘Risk’ is defined in the Collins Dictionary as ‘the possibility of incurring misfortune or loss; hazard’ and Furedi (1997) adds the increased possibility of damage, injury, illness or death. Lupton (1999) states that risk is seen negatively by society. When health risk is discussed it usually relates to risk of a negative consequence. When financial risk is discussed it is usually in terms of potential loss.

The term ‘At Risk’ is used to identify people who may experience abuse, neglect, injuries and losses. This term has negative connotations about vulnerable people needing protection and infers powerlessness (Furedi 1997). Health risks are also an important concern. But the result of heightened risk awareness does not give people a feeling of security but more anxiety and worry (Furedi 1997).

Risk taking is also discussed with quite a different meaning to those above. It refers to taking risks to gain benefit with those

risks identified and managed. The government has set an agenda for people with learning disabilities to become included valued participants in society (DoH 2001). For this to become reality, people will be exposed to new risks and benefit from such exposure. It is therefore not surprising that best practice in risk management is being published. The past five years has seen an increase in literature concerning risk management in the lives of people with learning disabilities.

Conversely, risk and the experience of people with PMLD and their families have yet to be explored with the complexity of managing risk missing from this new raft of publishing. Single issues such as manual handling are written about but tend to be from a staff focused point of view. A wider understanding of risk and the development of holistic, person centred ways of working with risk are essential if people with PMLD are to benefit from risk taking.

So are we talking about the same thing when we talk about risk with people who have learning disabilities and family carers? I would suggest not. Generally, risk is viewed negatively but is used in health and social care in terms of choices, empowerment and control. It is not surprising that many research reports (see the work of Alaszewski) state that family members, and people with learning disabilities often have a negative view of risk and risk taking.

Having spent time understanding what my wider family understands by the word risk I can see the benefits in exploring family carers’ understanding of the terminology of risk management. When my family were invited to a meeting where risk was being discussed, they worried about the negatives

far more than I was aware of. They thought about their children being 'At Risk' and of the ability of others to protect them. They thought about loss and injury and given the normal perceptions of risk this is not surprising. By the time meetings happened they were anxious and worried and professional's ideas about risk adverse parents were reinforced. Misunderstanding of terms led to confusion on both sides.

What risks need to be managed?

Kemshall (2002) argues that 'risk' is replacing 'need' in health and social services, with professionals reducing risk as opposed to meeting needs. Kemshall does not adequately discuss risk to whom, although she implies managing risk to government, organisations and professionals through risk reduction for individuals. Is there any evidence for this? Are people now seen as risky as opposed to needy and in what way 'risky'?

Current risk research in services for people with learning disabilities has not looked holistically at the family. Neither has it brought together the myriad risks that families may encounter and how they impact on each other. Each professional group seems to concentrate on different aspects of risk. In one family there were 24 professionals involved in managing needs and the associated risks, e.g. 15 professionals managed different aspects of health risks, 6 professionals managed aspects of risk in education services, with 3 more managing risks associated with providing care at home.

But does anyone view these needs and risks holistically to enable better management? The answer is no-one except the parents. Their heightened awareness together with their parental instinct to protect their children, at whatever age, creates anxiety and worry. However initial findings indicate that there are core risks that need to be managed and if managed well could have a positive affect on the lives of people who have PMLD and their families.

Communication

The risks associated with not being able to communicate with the person who has PMLD has to be high on the list of core risks

to be managed. In order to manage any risk, the person who has PMLD must be included as much as possible and to do this you need to be able to communicate with them. Inability to communicate means you are 'at risk' from a range of things, you cannot let people know about your life, your worries, fears, desires, and basic needs or anything that you want to stop. You cannot influence decisions about your life. You are not included in planning your own life. However, improving communication remains low on the list of needs to be met and risks to be managed. The cynic might say this is because lack of communication support would not lead to litigation, and services need not be provided if they are unaware of that need. Others might say that people who have PMLD cannot learn to communicate. The families I spoke with said that their family members could all communicate IF staff were willing to learn to listen and use augmentative and alternative communication strategies. This need is possibly ignored because the risk is only to the person with PMLD and not to services and organisations. There seems to be little desire to meet this need and manage these risks.

Co-ordination of service

The next core risks are those associated with multiple service providers and a lack of co-ordination between them. Although there is research and best practice advice (Dale 1996), it does not seem to be impacting on the families I spoke with. Even within one organisation, such as health or education, professionals seem unable to co-ordinate. This results in poor need identification and poor risk management. There is no keyworker spanning one organisation, let alone, co-ordinating several organisations. Again, this is because professionals only need to prove they manage risks within their sphere of responsibility.

Movement and lifting

People who have PMLD often need support to move around. Many use wheelchairs and need specialist seating and sleeping equipment to help them stay safe and healthy. This is one area where risk management seems to be changing. At home OTs assess for manual handling

equipment (only the minimum to meet the highest risk) and it is generally provided. At school, manual-handling equipment and training is given to staff. At hospitals, staff members are trained and have equipment or ask those escorting people to do the manual handling without equipment (something of an anomaly). Following the DDA, many buildings are now accessible without the need to carry wheelchairs upstairs or fight with awkward doors. Facilities such as swimming pools are providing more equipment to help people access the pool. There is definitely a move to manage the risks in meeting people's access and movement needs.

Kemshall's writing rings even truer here. Note that parents do not generally receive training (although occasionally some is offered) and only the minimum of equipment is provided. For all the other initiatives in managing these risks it seems to be to ensure litigation does not occur under Acts such as Health and Safety and DDA. The fact that in hospital, parents are expected to do something that staff members are not allowed to do because it might result in staff injury (and suing their employers) is disgusting. At one appointment a mother and myself performed 10 lifts without equipment over two hours, some in confined spaces. This was despite the fact that we had informed the hospital we needed a hoist well in advance. If we had not performed these lifts, it would have resulted in poor physical examination and some investigations not being completed. We wrote and complained and made staff fill in incident forms to highlight the dangers to us but most family carers would not do this and so the problem remains hidden.

Risk is intrinsically linked to control (Culpitt 1999), and it could be argued that service providers have social responsibilities to control the risks in the lives of people whom they support who are vulnerable. For more able people with learning disabilities, the risks in developing skills using community facilities, like crossing the road and using public transport. If an incident occurs resulting in injury or death, the organisations

are protected if the risks have been managed with the relevant documentary proof. This is not to say that this is the only reason for wanting to manage risk. As a paid carer, I would never want someone I support to be injured or die because of risk taking, but I have to let people develop their independence and reliance on me. But for a group of people for whom independence is not an aim, risk can revolve around preventing loss as opposed to risk in its risk taking and development context. Manthorpe et al (1997) write how risk and its management is linked to the quality of services for people with PMLD and I think that this needs to include people's ability to do some risk taking in managed ways meaning that an individual's communication needs have to be managed much better. Alongside this, the management of the risks associated with poor communication and co-ordination of services has to be taken seriously and as this has been called for over the last 10 years with no real improvements it show the lack of commitment to doing anything about it.

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Research

Launch of the Sunfield Research Institute

*Reported by Jo Egerton,
Sunfield Assessment and
Outreach Service*

The launch of the Sunfield Research Institute, on 27 January 2005, was the celebration of a research culture at Sunfield which has its roots back in the 1930s. There was a sense of excitement and expectation as professionals from many different fields, both inside and outside Sunfield, came together to hear the Keynote Address given by Dr Nanette Smith of University College Worcester, followed by lectures from Professor Lesley Saunders, the General Teaching Council's Policy Adviser for Research, and Professor Barry Carpenter, Chief Executive of Sunfield. The focus of afternoon presentations was current research at Sunfield by Sunfield practitioners (see descriptions below).

Sunfield provides education and 52-week care for children with severe and complex learning needs, including those who have challenging behaviour and those diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorders, aged between 6 and 19 years. **The school, established in 1930, has a long and proud tradition of being responsive to its children's needs. It offered them education long before the 1971 watershed. Nordoff and Robbins developed their music therapy here, and Michael Wilson developed colour light therapy as a medium for more meaningful interaction with the children. Referring to archive material from the school in 1943, Barry Carpenter quoted:**

'The children are the bearers of the future.
The decisions
they will make tomorrow depend upon how
we teach them today.'

The founding of the Research Institute by Sunfield's Trustees recognises and celebrates both the early research at

Sunfield and the research carried out today through the enthusiasm and commitment of grass roots practitioners, and establishes 'research in action through practice' at the heart of Sunfield's response to its children's changing needs.

The message from all three main speakers was this. Disability research has moved on. As practitioners, we know much of what we need to know about the causes and characteristics of disability; the focus of our enquiry must shift to the ways these children engage, and the ways we need to adapt our practice so that they can. The evidence we need is at our fingertips – in the communication of our children in their homes, with their families, in our clinics, our care homes, our classrooms. As professionals, we need to engage with the largely untapped resource of action research for our inspiration and solutions. And for this we need passion. As Nanette Smith said, quoting Marion Dodds, that beyond definitions, 'Action research is passionate enquiry.'

All three speakers clearly articulated an ethos around research and practice which the Sunfield Research Institute strives to embrace. The need for research to be:

- *child- and family-centred* – our inspiration for change must be the children we are working with
- *practice-informing* – the only justifiable outcome is improvement for those children
- *inclusive* – children and families should be welcomed as research partners in their own right
- *collaborative* – everyone involved can contribute a valuable perspective, no matter what their role.

The aims of Sunfield Research Institute are clearly set out in the Institute's information leaflet:

- To develop our understanding of the nature and impact of severe and complex learning difficulties, including autistic spectrum disorders

- To find new and improved ways of supporting our young people and their families.

Lesley Saunders encouraged all practitioners at the Launch to reclaim the language of professional discussion through action research. As she reminded us, two years ago, the OECD's impression was that, in the UK, the average teacher was largely unaware of their profession as research-based. 'It seems to me that the tide has turned,' she said. Evidence from practitioners helps us to connect to new challenges – to address the children who will be in our classrooms in the future. 'Sunfield Research Institute is an exciting project,' she concluded. 'I am sure that it will be an inspiration, as well as an evidence-based resource, not only for staff and [Launch] participants, but also for the system as a whole.'

SUNFIELD ACTION RESEARCH PROJECTS

Engaging the feeling and will of children with autism through the medium of colour

Dr Diana Pauli

There are a considerable number of authors in the recent literature on autism who suggest that the impairment lies in the realm of feeling and will, as well as with thinking. During the course of this research, the attempt has been made to interact with children in a way that lays particular emphasis on engaging the feelings and will, rather than the intellect. Changing colours, in a specially designed room, have been used to enhance the mood and atmosphere during interaction.

Adapting the Sherborne Developmental Movement Programme for Pupils with Autism

*Jotham Konaka, SEN Teacher/Researcher,
Sunfield*

Jotham has recently been appointed by Sunfield to conduct research into the use of the Sherborne Developmental Movement Programme to support social interaction, communication and curriculum access for

children with profound autistic spectrum disorders. His presentation outlined the objectives and rationale behind the project, the research design and methodology, and the outcomes from phase 1 and planning for phase 2.

Sunfield are grateful for the generous sponsorship of the Three Guineas Trust and for the support of the Sherborne Association UK.

An exploration of the effects of diet on the quality of learning and engagement of children with autistic spectrum disorders *Teresa Whitehurst, Research Officer, Sunfield, and Francine Griffith, Assistant CE (Education), Sunfield*

There is a growing body of evidence which suggests that children with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) experience a range of digestive problems and nutritional deficits. In collaboration with Patrick Holford, of the Institute for Optimum Nutrition in London, Sunfield is exploring the effects of diet on the quality of learning and engagement of children with ASD.

Play and its role in the developing child with severe learning disabilities

Kellyanne Thornton and Emma Cox,

Assistant Psychologists, Sunfield

Many students with severe learning disabilities display challenging behaviours that impede access to education, the curriculum, learning and living. All challenging behaviours have common elements: they are meaningful; relate to the needs and wants of a child; and are a means of communication and control. This research heightens the importance of play in breaking down behavioural barriers and of utilising creative means in conjunction with a structured approach to encourage skills for development.

Researching pupils' perspectives on inclusion and disability

Teresa Whitehurst, Research Officer,

Sunfield

Much of the research focusing on inclusion has centred around teacher perspectives of the ways in which inclusion works and its benefits to students. This project, however, focuses upon mainstream pupils' perceptions of pupils with disabilities, and has produced outcomes which may be useful to practitioners in terms of the ways in which we support young children to engage with inclusion projects.

What families say – working with families as research partners

Barry Carpenter, CE, Sunfield, Sally Conway, Family Services Co-ordinator, Sunfield, and Teresa Whitehurst, Research Officer, Sunfield

Using a family-centred model of research developed by Russell (2003), based on earlier work by Carpenter (1997) and Wolfendale (2002), Sunfield conducted an exploration into how families perceived and felt about their own induction to Sunfield, aside from that of their children. This project engaged families (through the Parent Advisory Group) and Sunfield staff volunteers in setting the interview questions (PAG), interviewing (staff) and analysis (PAG and staff) alongside the principal researchers. The key recommendations will help the organisation to continue its process of service improvement and development through systematic reflection.

Presentation handouts from both the principal and presentation speakers and/or the Sunfield Publications Leaflet, which lists articles published in relation to present and past research, are available on request from Tracey Deeley, Publications Officer (Tel.: 01562 882253; email: TraceyD@sunfield.worcs.sch.uk).

If you would like further information about the Sunfield Research Institute or any of the research projects described above, please contact Teresa Whitehurst, Research Officer (Tel.: 01562 881320; email: TeresaW@sunfield.worcs.sch.uk).

ID Forum

This Forum is brought to you by the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities
<http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk>

Subject: Parents of children with learning disabilities are not receiving adequate support

Issue date: 22 February 2005

Parents of children with learning disabilities are not receiving adequate support, says the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities

Many parents raising a child born with a learning disability do not get the support they need, according to new research by the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities. This research has informed First Impressions: Emotional and Practical Support for Families - a booklet for families of children with learning disabilities - that will be launched on Saturday 19 March.

The research aimed to address the emotional needs of families from the time of diagnosis until the child is five years old and explored four main areas:

- " How the diagnosis was delivered
- " Information given immediately following the diagnosis and during the following years
- " The emotional and practical support required at this time
- " The impact on family life, including the effects on other children, extended family and lifestyle

It found that while around half of all parents interviewed received adequate help, most described how they were left in the dark, forced to fight for a diagnosis, received poor information and were left to cope on their own.

One mother's tale of her child's diagnosis of Down's Syndrome was particularly negative. Whilst recovering from an emergency Caesarean operation, she asked the midwife how her child was and was told, "you'll know when you see it".

The research also found that what happens to families in the early stages following a diagnosis is crucial - even relationships between parents can deteriorate because of the strain.

The Foundation's First Impressions: Emotional and Practical Support for Families booklet offers practical advice on topics such as coping with an initial diagnosis, pre-school education, getting help, family support and financial advice.

Hazel Morgan, Co-Director of the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities, says: "The emotional well-being and mental health of these families must be paramount: they are the life long supporters and advocates for their sons and daughters with learning disabilities. We must empower families with a range of resources that address their needs, not only those of the child with a disability. 'First Impressions' will make a valuable contribution in this way."

First Impressions: Emotional and Practical Support for Families, written by Alison Cowan is available from 19 March from the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities. Copies are free unless buying in bulk and can be obtained by calling 020 7803 1100 or visiting www.learningdisabilities.org.uk

Ends

For more information or media review copies of the publication, contact: Laura Williams or Fran Gorman on 020 7803 1130 / 020 7803 1128 or email

lwilliams@fpd.org.uk / fgorman@fpd.org.uk

Notes to editors

There are an estimated 1 million people in the UK with a learning disability. The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities uses research and projects to promote the rights of people with learning disabilities and their families. Launched in October 1998, it is part of the Mental Health Foundation, which has been working with people with mental health problems and people with learning disabilities for more than 50 years.

To contribute to this discussion reply by e-mail to this message. To start a new topic please reply using a new subject heading. To send voice or video messages or messages with pictures please e-mail files@choiceforum.org To view, or reply to this message on the forum website and to see previous messages in this discussion, please visit:

<http://www.ldforums.org/WebX?50@@.2cc3d9ff>

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To unsubscribe from this discussion go to <http://www.ldforums.org/WebX?280@@.2cc3d9ff!folder=.1dcf5463>

"Value me, value my communication"

Friday 18th March 2005
East Midlands Conference Centre University Park
Nottingham NG7 2RJ

Conference being held by BILD, Mencap, Department of Health, Learning Disability Task Force, Royal College of Speech and Language Specialist, National Forum and the Valuing People Support Team

3-5 people can come for £400 00 (£470.00)
Professionals - £145.00 (£170.38)
Person with a learning disability/family carer - £25.00 (£29.38)

Contact Liz Howells. BILD



REVIEW

‘Easy guide to being held safely, for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or autism, their teachers and parents.’

Published by British Institute of Learning Difficulties (BILD) (no named author)
Illustrated by Peter Bushell
BILD, 2004, 14pages, A4 paperback.
ISBN 1 904082 71 8

This short publication is intended to be used as a guide by children and young people with learning difficulties and/or autism. The consistent style and layout of the piece reflects this audience as demonstrated by the language which is reminiscent of ‘Social Stories’ and the use of expressive and visual illustrations.

The guide addresses the important issue of the use of restrictive physical interventions in both schools and other settings from the perspective of the *receiver* of such interventions. The guide does this by providing a range of scenarios and numbered lists which relate to information for the young person about being held alongside a list of what teachers should do.

The publication is aimed towards the young person and the issues are significantly simplified. However such a general overview of the factors which need to be considered might provide a starting point for professionals to reflect upon their own practice in this area or identify areas for discussion in a wider staff team. These include concepts such as the ‘clear rules for holding’ and suitable ‘ways of holding children and young people’.

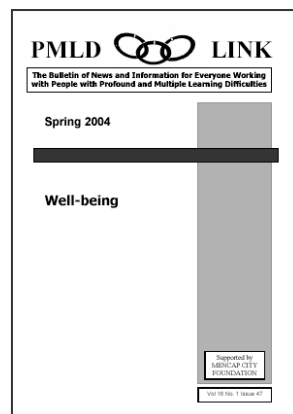
The guide recognises the need for a graded and appropriate level of physical intervention and makes a distinction between ‘being held gently’ and ‘being held firmly’. This is supported with statements and illustrations, describing when it is acceptable for children to be held in these ways. The language and illustrations allow

for the guide to be used by the person individually or read and discussed together with a member of staff.

The strength of this guide is the recognition of the need for children and young adults to understand the issues surrounding physical interventions, set within a concrete and clear framework. For many individuals however, these concepts will be difficult to grasp and the information contained in the guide will not be accessible for all. In such instances the guide might prompt professionals to consider other ways to communicate to these individuals, paying heed to their needs and individual perspective.

Kyffin Jones, Senior lecturer,
Centre for Special Needs Education and Research,
University College Northampton

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If you have not subscribed for 2005 go to page 41 and complete the form.

NEWS, PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES



The PMLD Network is a group of charities, professionals and parents, who are working together to make things better for children and adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities and their families and carers. It;

- brings together people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, their parents and professionals
- acts as a forum for sharing good practice
- gives guidance for the development of local and national services
- offers support and information to parents and carers
- campaigns on issues relating to PMLD that are identified by members of the network.
- New look website to include downloadable resources

PMLD Network Discussion Forum aims to share ideas, let each other know about resources and events, ask questions, find answers and support each other to make things better for people with profound and multiple learning disabilities. The main discussion areas have been; Direct payments, inclusion, service user involvement, day services modernisation, education, changing facilities. To join the PMLD Network, please go to <http://www.pmlDnetwork.org/pmlDjoin.html>

‘Valuing People with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities’ report was written to ensure the vision set out in the ‘Valuing People’ really does include all people with learning disabilities. We carried out a survey to find out the impact this report had had on Partnership Boards. The report and survey summary are available on the website

PMLD Network Seminar 2004. The presentations given at this event are available on the website. We plan to hold another seminar for Partnership Boards in the Autumn in Birmingham and also one to support Partnership Board PMLD champions.

All Party Parliamentary Group on Learning Disabilities. Beverley Dawkins, Chair of the PMLD Network, spoke at this event about the rights of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities. The minutes of this and the action points presented there are available on the website.

www.mencap.org.uk/pmlD. Mencap, a member of the PMLD Network has launched new pages about people with profound and multiple learning disabilities on their website. They contain useful resources and information including; highlighting individual needs and wishes through video, campaign aims, projects and events.

The PMLD Network discussion forum (www.pmlDnetwork.org) is run and maintained by the

Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities, 7th Floor, 83 Victoria Street, London SW1H

0HW. Tel. + 44 (0) 20 7802 0316. Fax. + 44 (0) 20 7802 0301. Email: nmorris@fpld.org.uk

Website www.learningdisabilities.org.uk Registered Charity No: 801130 Company Registration

No: 2350846



EQUALS is a national resource for teachers of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

EQUALS has now been offering its services to schools for over ten years. In this time it has built up a strong record in supporting teachers to apply the principles of QCA guidelines to curriculum development for all pupils with learning difficulties, including those with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

EQUALS is managed by an Executive Committee

It consists of 15 co-ordinators who are head teachers, class teachers college lecturers and special advisers. They meet three times a year and EQUALS pays for their travel costs. From this group there is a Steering Committee that overviews developments on a weekly basis. These practicing professionals work in a voluntary capacity and decide on priorities to guide the future activities. In addition, each co-ordinator has a specific responsibility to support the ongoing initiatives.

EQUALS manages a website

This can be found on www.equals.co.uk

This website has a number of key areas which provide information;

- **Publications;** which highlights current EQUALS documents and provides a preview of their contents
- **Conferences and Workshops;** indicating the forthcoming events that EQUALS is supporting
- **New EQUALS Initiatives;** which highlight the new publications that are in preparation and invitations to join writing teams.
- **Assessment and Target Setting;** highlighting developments related to the P scale assessment with PACE
- **Moving On 14-19 Curriculum;** and its accreditation scheme details

- **Teaching and Learning;** relating to the current national research initiative
- **Research and Development;** which gives updates on websites that are of professional value in aspects of curriculum development
- **Forum;** an interactive site for raising questions of professional concern

EQUALS produce QCA related Schemes of Work

A major recent development has been the co-ordination of the writing of new Schemes of Work and strategies that are in line with the 2001 QCA guidance for pupils with learning difficulties. The following subjects have been written by teachers who are members of EQUALS

- Science
- Maths
- Literacy
- Speaking and Listening
- Personal, Social, Health Education & Citizenship
- Design Technology
- Information and Communication Technology
- History
- Geography

All of these materials begin at level P1 and are appropriate for pupils with PMLD The 14-19 curriculum

EQUALS also produce curriculum to support the teaching of 14-19 year olds, which similarly begin at level P1.

You can download previews of all of these documents from the Publications page of the EQUALS website.

For further information please phone the EQUALS office, 0191 2728600

Keith Humphreys
EQUALS Quality Assurance Manager

Check My Map "One place for all Learning Disability services"

- * It is a groundbreaking, not-for-profit site that gives FREE promotion to all Learning Disability (LD) Services across the UK and Ireland.
- * One place to find all your local and national services, psychology, education, health, companies, therapies, charities, projects, schools, clubs, sensory teams, information, support, consultancies, advocacy ... everything, across every sector.
- * Likened to a LD Yellow Pages, you can search the site by town, region or category to find every service, no matter how big or small.
- * You can promote any LD related service or resource quickly, easily and without any charge.
- * Click on www.checkthemap.org <<http://www.checkthemap.org/>> now, to find out more. This is a powerful new site - not to be missed.

Imogen Wedgewood

imogen@checkthemap.org

www.checkthemap.org

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/>

This new government web site is all about children's services from the governments perspective. It is quite an exciting time at the moment with lots of policy and legislation driving the children's agenda forward.

On this web site you can access key documents and see how the health, social services, education and voluntary sectors are been driven to work together in providing one seamless service.

The links and build up on this site are happening at great speed and there are several areas that are interactive which would be a good avenue for parents to feed into.


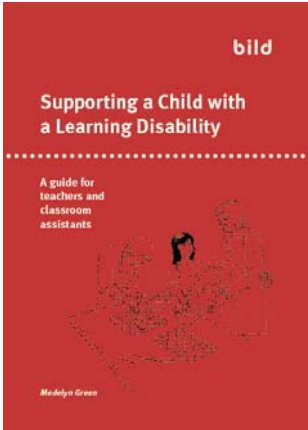
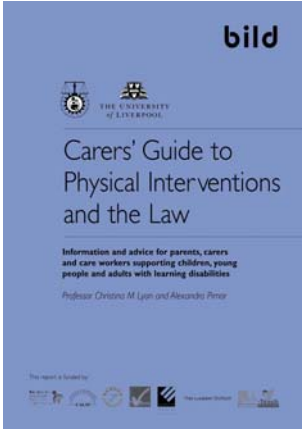
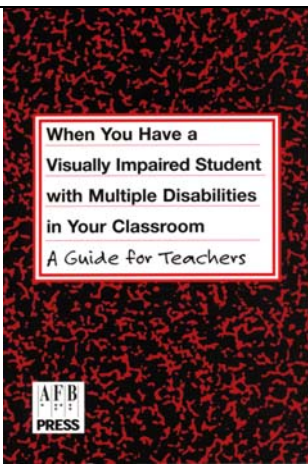
Children with profound and complex needs are included here and it is important to keep the profile raised by interacting on this site.

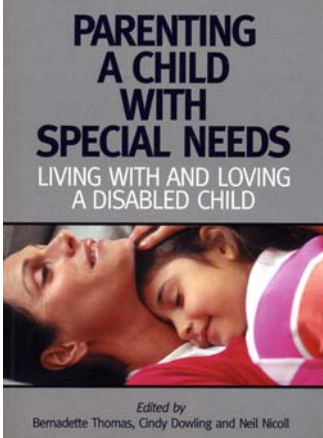

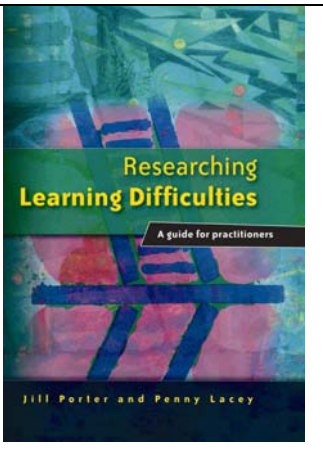
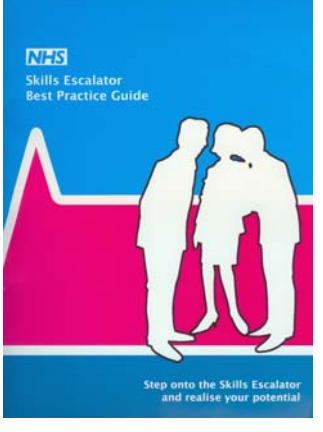
The site includes sections on such areas as schools and youth so that you can find specific information here, and includes a newsletter – the first being about Professor Al Aynsley-Green appointment as England's first Children's Commissioner. This new appointment happening at the beginning of March 2005.

The site is easy to use and navigate your way around although there is a danger, if it continues to grow at its present speed, of it becoming too overcrowded.

At the moment it lacks feed-in on the discussion boards from service users but since its inclusive approach is highly visible I'm sure this will change.

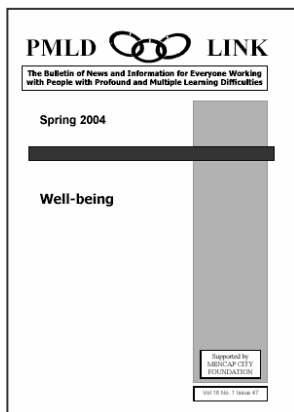
Di Foxwell Community Nurse and Distance Tutor

 <p>bild Transition toolkit A framework for managing change and successful transition planning for children and young people with autism spectrum conditions Edited by Karen Broderick and Tina Mason-Williams</p>	<p>Edited by: Karen Broderick and Tina Mason-Williams</p> <p>Publisher: BILD</p> <p>ISBN: 1 904082 89 0</p> <p>Pub Date: 2005</p> <p>Price: £18.00</p> <p>Members Price: £16.20</p>	<p>Transition Toolkit</p> <p>A framework for managing change and successful transition planning for children and young people with autism spectrum conditions.</p> <p>Produced by teachers, advisers and parents, the toolkit is designed for staff who may know very little about ASC.</p>
 <p>bild Supporting a Child with a Learning Disability A guide for teachers and classroom assistants Madelyn Green</p>	<p>Author: Madelyn Green</p> <p>Publisher: BILD</p> <p>ISBN: 1 904082 87 4</p> <p>Pub Date: 2005</p> <p>Price: £6.00</p> <p>Members Price: £5.40</p>	<p>Supporting a child with a learning disability</p> <p>A guide for teachers and classroom assistants</p> <p>This guide is a practical introduction to supporting a child with a learning disability for teachers and classroom assistants. It identifies the particular difficulties that affect learning and the triggers that highlight the need for intervention. It includes simple and effective strategies that may help.</p>
 <p>bild Carers' Guide to Physical Interventions and the Law Information and advice for parents, carers and care workers supporting children, young people and adults with learning disabilities Professor Christina M Lyon and Alexandra Pimor</p>	<p>Author(s): Professor Christina Lyon and Alexandra Pimor</p> <p>Publisher: BILD</p> <p>ISBN: 1 904082 81 5</p> <p>Pub Date:</p> <p>Price: £12.00</p> <p>Members Price: £10</p>	<p>Carers' Guide to Physical Interventions and the Law</p> <p>Clear information and advice for parents, other informal carers and care workers, covering employers' responsibilities, criminal and civil law, and human rights law.</p>
 <p>When You Have a Visually Impaired Student with Multiple Disabilities in Your Classroom: A Guide for Teachers AFB PRESS</p>	<p>Author(s): Erin, J</p> <p>Publisher: AFB</p> <p>ISBN: 0891288732</p> <p>Pub Date: 2004</p> <p>Price: £8.50</p>	<p>When You Have a Visually Impaired Student with Multiple Disabilities in Your Classroom: A Guide for Teachers</p> <p>Part of the American Foundation of the Blind "When you have..." series, this title presents a basic overview of the impact that visual impairment and additional disability can have on learning. The book outlines the needs and abilities of a range of students including those with severe disabilities and those who may be more academically orientated. It takes a look at some of the common conditions that students with visual impairment and additional or multiple disabilities might have and offers suggestions for supporting learning.</p>

 <p>PARENTING A CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS LIVING WITH AND LOVING A DISABLED CHILD</p> <p><i>Edited by Bernadette Thomas, Cindy Dowling and Neil Nicoll</i></p>	<p>Author(s): Thomas, B; Dowling, C & Nicoll, N</p> <p>Publisher: Souvenir Press</p> <p>ISBN: 0285637002</p> <p>Pub Date: 2004</p> <p>Price: £14.99</p>	<p>Living with and loving a disabled child</p> <p>A wonderful book in which parents share their experiences of bringing up children with disabilities. Their stories are loosely grouped into chapters on grief; anger; denial; acceptance; empowerment; marriage family and friends; love and joy, laughter etc. We meet many families in different circumstances and caring for children with different disabilities (autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, albinism, optic nerve hypoplasia) but each story shares an honesty in its approach and captures the heartaches alongside the joys of living with and loving a child with special needs.</p>
 <p>Supporting the use of the P scales in the East Midlands Region</p>	<p>Author: P Scales Team</p> <p>Publisher: N/A</p> <p>ISBN: N/A</p> <p>Pub Date: 2005</p> <p>Price: <i>CD only is £30.00 + £1 p+p. Hard copy version & CD will be £70.00 + £8.50 p+p</i></p>	<p>Supporting the use of the P Scales in the East Midlands Region</p> <p>These materials have been developed by the East Midlands P Scales project, to aid schools and LEAs in supporting the process of using the P scales. The resource is designed to be flexible in its use with all aspects of pack downloadable.</p> <p>For more information visit the website www.pscal.es.com or contact the P Scales team pscalesteam@Northampton.ac.uk or tel: 01604 892843</p>
 <p>Researching Learning Difficulties A guide for practitioners</p> <p>Jill Porter and Penny Lacey</p>	<p>Author: Jill Porter Penny Lacey</p> <p>Publisher: Paul Chapman Publishing</p> <p>ISBN: 0-7619-4851-1</p> <p>Pub Date: 2004</p> <p>Price: £19.99</p>	<p>Researching Learning Difficulties</p> <p>The authors recognize that there are tensions, especially the difficulty of validating research on small varied populations in a wide range of schools, community and other settings. The book will help readers to critically evaluate the implications of research reports for their own practice.</p> <p>This book is for researchers, teachers and professionals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in specialist and inclusive community and educational settings - following courses of continuing professional development - doing research (Masters and Doctorate, Education, Social Sciences, Psychology, Public Policy).
 <p>NHS Skills Escalator Best Practice Guide</p> <p>Step onto the Skills Escalator and realise your potential</p>	<p>Further information: Jenny Sharp jsharp@warks.col.ac.uk</p>	<p>Postural Care Skills Programme</p> <p>Warwickshire College is offering this new course for all involved in the care of people with complex physical needs. The course has a worldwide reputation and this is the first time that it has been offered by an educational establishment</p> <p>The Postural Care Skills Programme empowers carers, clinicians and managers to provide and monitor the effects of postural care, thus people with complex physical needs to grow and /or stay as straight, comfortable and independent as possible.</p>

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Short Courses and Conferences

CONTACT DETAILS

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British Institute of Learning Disabilities
Campion House, Green Street,
Kidderminster, Worcestershire
DY10 1JL
☎ 01562 723025
E-mail: learning@bild.org.uk
website: www.bild.org.uk

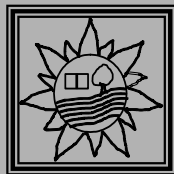


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E-mail: FloCatalyst@aol.com
Web: www.cerl.net

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E-mail: Sunfield@sunfield.worcs.sch.uk



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Further details:
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Lancashire LA4 6BT
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Fax: 01524 832 852
E-mail: info@concept-training.co.uk



University College Northampton

Further details:
Centre for Professional Development in
Education
☎ 01604 892695
Fax: 01604 714635
E-mail: cpde@northampton.ac.uk



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Wear, NE30 2YG
☎ 0191 272 8600
Email: admin@equals.co.uk
Website: www.equals.co.uk



Courses at Tate Britain

Using Handling Resources
For Staff who work with adults with learning
difficulties

Part 1 (support staff only) Wednesday 6 July 2005
Part 2 (pairs of staff & clients) Thursday 7 July 2005

This course introduces Tate Britain's handling boxes. These provide highly flexible resources that can be geared to client need. Handling boxes contain objects linked to particular works, including samples of materials, tools and related images. These help to focus and prompt discussion and activities. Boxes can be borrowed for use at your own pace by staff and clients. Participants should have attended an Access 1 course.

Course fee: £30 for parts and 2, including information pack. Clients attend free of charge

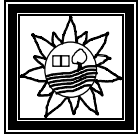
To discuss courses & other programmes for community groups in more detail please telephone: Sharon Trotter, Tate Britain on 020 7887 8769 or Alison Cox or Joleen Keizer, Tate Modern on 020 7401 5069/5068

Meeting the needs of People with Profound Learning Disabilities

People with profound learning disabilities are a growing group in both children's and adult services, but meeting their needs is not an easy task. This one day workshop will focus on identifying and meeting communication needs, concentrating on those who are at the very earliest stages of communication. Participants will be encouraged to reflect on how they interact with people who are profoundly disabled and how they can develop strategies that will improve quality of life.

London Monday 20 September 2004
Kidderminster Monday 18 October 2004
Sheffield Monday 22 November 2004
Swindon Monday 6 December 2004
Kidderminster Monday 17 January 2005
Warrington Friday 1 April 2005
Kidderminster Friday 6 May 2005






Sunfield
Professional Development Centre


DATE	COURSE
20 April	Mums Day
19 May	Sherborne Level 2
8 June	The Life Limited Child
9 June (t.b.c)	Promoting a Learning Environment
20 May/14 Jun/22 Jun (tbc)	The Children's Bill
15 June – 7 August (t.b.c)	Challenging Behaviour
26 June	Dads Day
28 June	Adult Siblings
29 June	Challenging Behaviour
30 June	PowerPoint for PMLD (Hands on)

Valuing the Health of Children and Adults with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities



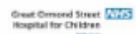
Thursday 19th and Friday 20th May 2005
Hilton Hotel, Warwick


A joint venture between



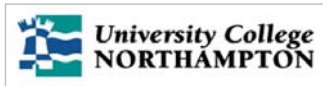
MENCAP bild

Understanding Learning Disability



<p>Concept Training</p> <p>Workshop Programme Spring 2005</p>																															
<p>“Understanding the Multi-Sensory Concept”</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>Leicester</td><td style="text-align: right;">6th April</td></tr> <tr><td>Solihull</td><td style="text-align: right;">7th April</td></tr> <tr><td>Winchester</td><td style="text-align: right;">18th April</td></tr> <tr><td>London</td><td style="text-align: right;">21st April</td></tr> <tr><td>Belfast</td><td style="text-align: right;">8th May</td></tr> <tr><td>Middlesbrough</td><td style="text-align: right;">24th May</td></tr> <tr><td>Edgbaston</td><td style="text-align: right;">9th June</td></tr> <tr><td>Maidstone</td><td style="text-align: right;">13nd June</td></tr> <tr><td>Wigan</td><td style="text-align: right;">22nd June</td></tr> </table>	Leicester	6 th April	Solihull	7 th April	Winchester	18 th April	London	21 st April	Belfast	8 th May	Middlesbrough	24 th May	Edgbaston	9 th June	Maidstone	13 nd June	Wigan	22 nd June	<p>“Very Special Mathematics”</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>Edgbaston</td><td style="text-align: right;">18th April</td></tr> <tr><td>Leicester</td><td style="text-align: right;">19th April</td></tr> <tr><td>Wigan</td><td style="text-align: right;">20th April</td></tr> <tr><td>Middlesbrough</td><td style="text-align: right;">24th May</td></tr> <tr><td>Winchester</td><td style="text-align: right;">21st June</td></tr> <tr><td>London</td><td style="text-align: right;">22nd June</td></tr> </table>	Edgbaston	18 th April	Leicester	19 th April	Wigan	20 th April	Middlesbrough	24 th May	Winchester	21 st June	London	22 nd June
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LONGER COURSES (with accreditation)



Master of Arts in Education

Understanding Severe and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (EDUM028)

This module addresses the requirements of the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) National Special Educational Needs Specialist Standards. This accreditation is awarded to students completing the requirements for the three modules EDUM028, EDUM029 and EDUM040. This module is directly related to developing the competencies, knowledge, understanding and critical reflection of students who are, or planning to be Special Education Needs Teachers. The module adheres to the national TTA SEN Specialist Standards (Core and Extension Standards) and students are given opportunities and support to collate evidence to meet the standards. For further Details: University College Northampton. Tel: 01604 892695. E-mail:

cpde@northampton.ac.uk

CHESL: Supporting Learners with SLD/PMLD

During the course we will be looking in detail at the needs of learners who are known to have a severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. They may also have other additional or associated disabilities, such as physical or sensory impairments. The course will examine topics of both a theoretical and practical nature to provide students with a greater understanding about this group of learners. Together with a broad range of strategies and approaches that can be applied to practice. The sessions will include lectures, workshop activities, discussion and some visiting speakers. For further Details: University College Northampton. Tel: 01604 892695. E-mail: cpde@northampton.ac.uk

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: Helen Bradley, course director, University of Birmingham, School of Medicine, Tel: 0121 415 8118

Multi-Sensory Impairment

The School of Education offers distance education programmes in multi-sensory impairment leading to an Advanced Certificate (one year), a BPhil (two years), a Postgraduate Certificate (one year), a Postgraduate Diploma (two years) or a MEd. These courses are designed for those (normally teachers) who work with a learner or learners with multi-sensory impairments. Alongside the BPhil and Postgraduate Diploma programmes qualified teachers may also study for recognition by the DfES as meeting their requirements for mandatory qualification for teachers of deaf-blind children. Further details: University of Birmingham, School of Education Tel: 0121 414 4866

Early years: Sensory and Multiple Needs

This exciting new programme is based in recent developments in early support for children with disabilities. It is designed to enable practitioners working with young children with sensory and multiple needs to work more effectively with this population. Participants from different disciplines will work together to extend co-operative learning and to benefit from others' experiences. Further details: University of Birmingham, School of Education Tel: 0121 414 4866

An Interdisciplinary Approach to Learning Difficulties (severe, Profound & Complex)

This distance education programme has been developed for the range of staff who work with people with severe, profound and complex learning difficulties, for example teachers and lecturers, nurses, therapists, psychologists and support staff. Further details: University of Birmingham, School of Education Tel: 0121 414 4878

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 three levels: Post experience certificate (level 1), Advanced Certificate (level 3), Postgraduate diploma and Masters (level M) Further details: University of Birmingham, School of Education Tel: 0121 414 4866

MSc in Learning Disabilities

A distance learning course covering all aspects of learning disabilities, however with a strong accent on adults. Consists of nine modules, dissertation and Viva. Each module is assessed by written assignments of varying sizes from 1500 words to 4000 words at level M. Further details: Stuart Cumella/Helen Bradley at the Medical School, Birmingham University.

ACE/Post Grad. Dip/Bphil./MEd.

An Interdisciplinary Approach to Learning Difficulties (Severe, Profound and Complex)

A brand new course is planned to commence Sept 2004 in the School of Education at Birmingham University. It will consist of a number of modules and a dissertation depending at which level you are studying. The course is by distance learning methods with tutorial support. Further details: Penny Lacey at the Education School, Birmingham University.

Certificate in Working with People who have Learning Disabilities

Distance learning courses from BILD for staff working in the learning disabilities field. Wide range of units available for study. A tutor throughout the course supports each student. Further details: BILD Learning Services Tel: 01562 723010

Profound Learning Disability and Multi Sensory Impairments

A two-year course for parents, carers and professionals which will develop skills and obtain recognition for them. Work is home based, supported by workshops and telephone tutor support. Issues relating to challenging behaviour, communication, education, ordinary life principles, sensory impairment, interdisciplinary working and epilepsy are addressed. The course is offered at three levels: Undergraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and Masters.

Further details: University of Manchester Faculty of Education Tel. 0161 275 3337 E-mail: [JTI Office@man.ac.uk](mailto:JTI.Office@man.ac.uk) www.education.man.ac.uk/pmlD/

Master Classes and Workshops - 2005

from

Catalyst Education Resources Limited

“The Sensory Emotional and Thinking Brain”

Multisensory approaches to learning for all children based on modern brain research and an understanding of early years development.

A Master Class delivered by Maria Robinson, early years consultant and author of *From Birth to One* And Flo Longhorn, Director, Catalyst Education, author and international trainer in special needs held on

28 April 2005 in central London

29 April 2005 in Chatham, Kent

7 May 2005 in Bradford

Report Back

Post Card from Ghana

In my article on 'Community Contacts for People with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties: Some Ghanaian perspectives', which was published in PMLD Link, Vol. 14 No 2: 2002, I outlined the major changes taking place in the education of pupils with PMLD in Ghana. Since I wrote the article, the following developments have taken place:

- ✓ More teachers are being trained to support children with PMLD and a greater number of those teachers already involved with these pupils are having more opportunities for in-service training, including workshops to update their skills. Such was not the case in the past when the focus was mainly on developing skills for teaching those pupils with moderate to severe learning difficulties
- ✓ From these workshop sessions, teachers in many of the special schools are now more able to meet the needs of pupils with PMLD and have developed a more positive attitude towards them. In the past the attitudes were very negative and many children and young people with complex needs were placed in residential schools.
- ✓ Staff in the Department of Special Education University of Education, Winneba, in Ghana, where I teach, are currently discussing the setting up of a special unit for training teachers to work with children with PMLD. The unit would provide in-depth education in this area which was not available in the past. It is anticipated that such an initiative will strengthen the capacity of the teachers.

I will report on the other development in a future post card

With all good wishes
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The editor of the next PMLD LINK is

Barry Carpenter

The copy date for all articles, information and news for the Summer issue is the 4th June 2005 and the focus is on 'Families & Carers'.

Articles can be long or short and they are welcomed from carers or professionals alike – we value YOUR experience and views. Please contact us if we can help you in any way. If you have any picture or photos to include we would love to see them (providing we have permissions).

Please send contributions to BarryC@sunfield.worcs.sch.uk or by post to Sunfield, Clent, Stourbridge, Worcestershire, DY9 9PB