

PMILD**LINK**

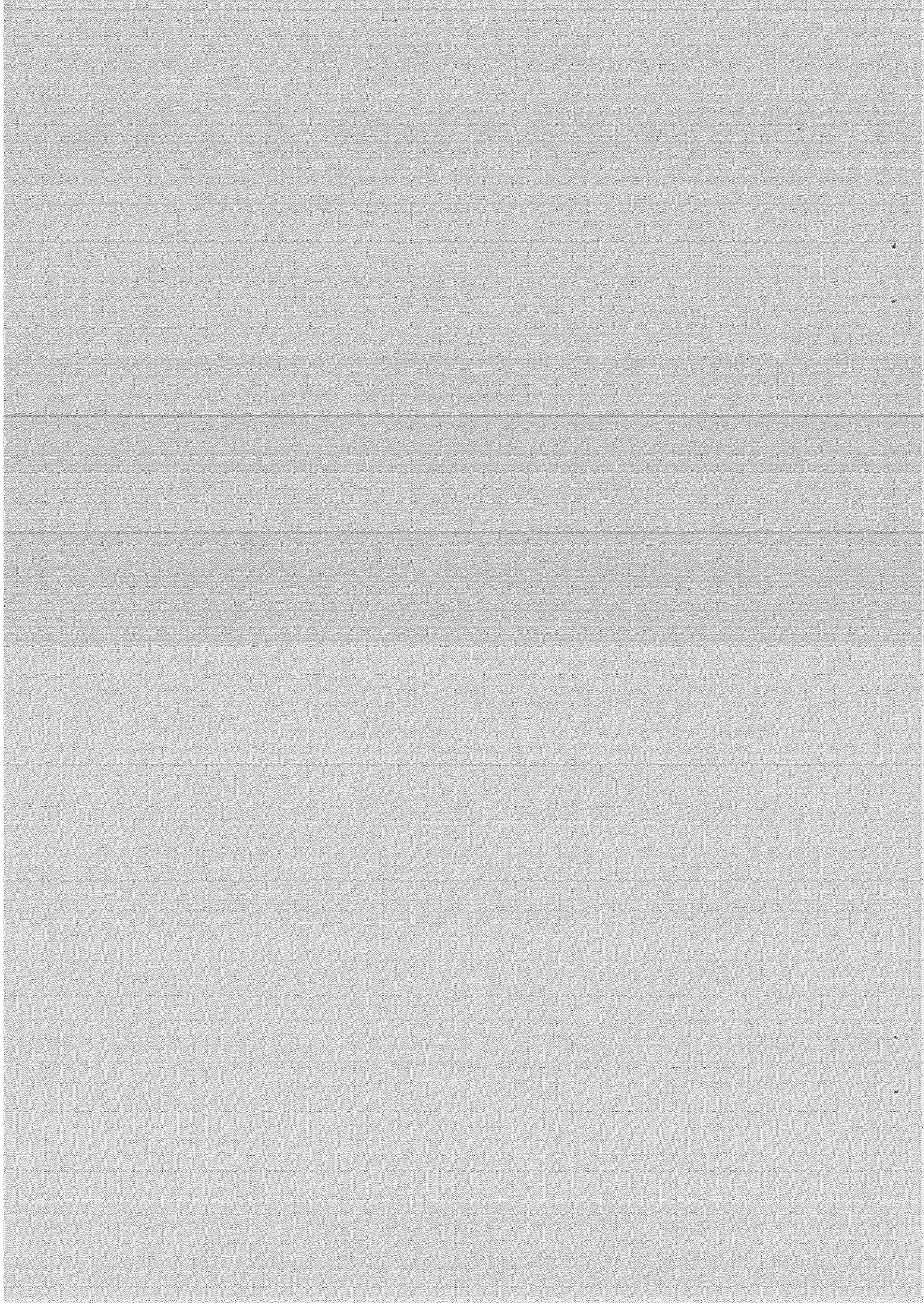
*The Bulletin of News and Information for Everyone Working with
People with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties*

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



EDITORIAL

Here is the last issue for the subscription year 2003. The topic of Technology has brought in a lot of articles - all of them about using 'high tech' equipment, and nothing on simple, 'low tech' solutions. But we live in an ever more high tech world, and it is encouraging to read about the equipment and the expertise which is being used to support people with PMLD to lead fuller and more inclusive lives.

If you work with someone who uses a bigMac, do try and find time to complete the questionnaire for Jade Burgess – she will be very grateful for your replies.

This is a time of change for PMLD-Link. I am retiring as editor (administrator, treasurer, chief cook and bottle washer) and plans are being made to transfer the production of PMLD-Link to an organization which can provide all the different facilities and functions needed to keep PMLD-Link going. The editorial group are very happy that the team at the Centre for Professional Development in Education at University College, Northampton under the guidance of Professor Richard Rose, have agreed to take this on. Other departments at the University are likely to become involved in the future, and will provide a non-educational perspective.

The process of transfer is just beginning, and the first change is that there will be guest editors for the next few issues, starting with Christina Tilstone, known to many of you for her teaching and writing in the educational field. She is a founder member of PMLD-Link, and core member of the editorial group. The guest editor for 16.2 will be Di Foxwell, also a member of the editorial group, distance education tutor, and now working as a Community Nurse for Wiltshire Learning Disability Team.

For the next issue, Tina will be dealing with all articles, and the Report Back, News and Letters Sections for the Spring issue Vol. 16.1, so send articles and information for these to her (details overleaf).

Enquiries, and any other information to be included should continue to come to me at the usual address, but as I shall be moving to Bristol, hopefully sometime in the next few months, please check that material has reached me. I will try and acknowledge receipt fairly promptly. We hope that there will be a contact name at University College before long - more news of this in the next issue.

Books for review and the reviews should be sent as usual to Ann Fergusson at University College Northampton (details below).

Business Matters

Copy date for all articles, information, news etc. for the Spring issue is mid-March. Don't forget to send articles, reports, news and letters to Tina.

It is time to renew your subscriptions for 2004, and a separate form is included in this mailing. Subscriptions should still be sent to me (see below), but do try and send them quickly, just in case I move sooner than I expect (of course, it all depends upon how quickly my house is sold).

Further information will be given in the Editorial of the next issue. Please check so that the transfer can be as smooth as possible. Contacts for the Spring issue are:

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FUTURE FOCUS - Well-being for People who have Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities.

This wide area of well-being is usually taken as the physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual domains that together contribute to making up the whole – or a holistic approach.

So the next edition of PMLD Link offers much scope for would be contributors either from a family or as a professional or both.

Under the physical domain besides the obvious areas of contributions to health we are also looking for articles about strategies which promote health. Examples could include areas such as diet and exercise, or may include the use of complementary therapies such as massage to increase movement for instance.

To date, complementary therapies with vulnerable people has had a very narrow focus on such areas as aromatherapy, acupuncture and pressure areas, and massage, whilst other areas formerly considered to be complementary therapies, have become mainstream i.e. sensory gardens, snoezelen rooms, art, music and dance therapy. It is also evident that some therapies seem to be fashionable for a while, and then go out of vogue. This does not seem to be due to lack of supportive evidence, but they may be overtaken by the latest interest. One of these areas which little is heard of at the moment is the use of colour therapy - can someone prove me wrong here?

Yet other complementary therapies such as homeopathy, the use of crystals, healing, or dousing, used with people who are vulnerable are noticeable by their absence. Is this due to a lack of written evidence or debate? Therein lies a challenge.

Of course the above areas raise the question of the vulnerability of people who have profound and multiple learning disabilities being subjected to the use of 'half baked ideas' and to the issue of consent. Consent being gained through communication (often non verbal methods, or very limited vocabulary) is a major contributor to someone's psychological and emotional well-being. Making Decisions is discussed by Beamer, Brookes and Edge (2001) in relation to people who have high support needs where they offer some practical tips including 'accessibility, networking, opportunities'. These areas were picked up (amongst others) last year by Williams, Simons and Swindon People First (2002), here in PMLD Link where a strong belief in the right to self-determination for everyone was expressed. Perhaps these are some of the areas you too are working in, if so do send an article about your work – we would love to hear what you are doing and about your progress.

In the *Valuing People* paper (2001) advocacy is a recurring theme and Peter Dawson (2003) an independent self-advocacy and empowerment worker, is concerned that the movement is dominated by those who are articulate and able. He talks about the need for supported advocacy for people who have high support needs and the use of alternative methods of communication. Interestingly he cites some of those mediums already discussed above. Supported self advocacy is still a very young area under the Values into Action group; it would be interesting to read something from this area in the next PMLD Link – anyone out there taking up the challenge?

Much has been written about the use of Intensive Interaction as a method of building up early relationships and communication (although there is room for more). This is one way of helping to share emotions and people such as Pheobe Caldwell have used the theories of Intensive Interaction and gone on to develop aids to help bridge togetherness and early relationship building.

The use of psychotherapy for people with high support needs is very much in its infancy with people such as Prouty, Van Werde and Portner (2002) recently publishing in this area.

Finally, the work of pioneers such as John Swinton from the University of Aberdeen in writing and researching about Spirituality and people who have learning disabilities, including those with high support needs, has brought this area, which over recent decades has often been neglected, to the attention of many. More can be found about this area of his work on www.learningdisabilities.org.uk You too may have something you wish to share with us which addresses the spiritual needs of people with high support needs – if so please write quickly to get into the next issue of PMLD-Link.

Hopefully some of the above will help to whet your appetite for our forthcoming issue of the journal either as a writer or reader – or both.

References

Beamer, S. Brookes, M. and Edge, J. (2001) Helping Individuals with high support needs to make decisions – some practical tips. *RNIB Focus* July 2001 Issue 33

Dawson, P. (2003) Current Views – More than getting Verbal. *APLD Learning Disability*, vol 20 No. 3

DOH (2001) *Valuing People* <http://www.doh.gov/learningdisabilities>

Prouty, G, Van Werde, D. and Portner, M. (2001) *Pre-Therapy Reaching contact – impaired clients*, Ross-on-Wye PCCS Books

Williams, V. Simons, K, and Swindon People First (2002) Norah Fry Centre – Can Adults who do not use words have control over their own lives? *PMLD Link* Vol. 14 No. 2 Issue 4

MULTIMEDIA PROFILING: a person centred tool for people with profound disabilities

Multimedia Profiling (MMP) is an approach which aims to help service users to represent and express themselves, with the aid of multimedia technology. A profile is a computer-based catalogue of a service user's daily activities and personal history. Each profile contains images conveyed through stills, video, sound, graphic and text. Users can access these via switches or touch screen.

The process actively involves the service user with family, friends, day and residential support workers, advocates, specialist practitioners and others. Over a period of time, and as a shared activity, the profile builds into a user centred resource that can be applied for a range of purposes. For example, user and service provider together can compile and present multimedia reports with images selected from the catalogue, that convey individual issues and support needs. Whereas record and review systems traditionally comprise text and are couched in the language of professionals, the multimedia profile is presented in a way that is understandable by users, and is under their control. This promotes equality in relationships between service users and service providers. The programme has been devised and developed by *Acting Up*, an organisation which works with people with severe communication difficulties, and offers training to the statutory and voluntary sectors.

Like many good ideas, multimedia profiling seems deceptively simple - but it is underpinned by a set of values which must be adhered to for the involvement of the service user or pupil to be genuine rather than tokenistic. MMP is viewed as a process rather than a product. Of course there is an output - the catalogue - but its value lies in the use to which it is put. Four key principles inform the implementation of this process:

User involvement. The service user is actively involved right from the start, in making decisions about the content of the files, in creating and selecting material such as photographs and video, and in determining access.

Consent and confidentiality. Consent is negotiated with the person, through a careful reading of their behaviour and responses. Material is treated with respect and in confidence.

Positive images. The information is presented in a way that shows the person positively, in order to enhance respect and dignity, and awareness of their strengths.

Team working. The compilation of a profile involves essential collaboration between keyworkers, family members, advocates and above all service managers, who need to ensure provision of time and space and resources for the process to be successful.

Evaluating MMP

A small pilot project was run in Chelsea and Westminster to evaluate the impact of the introduction of the programme on service users and staff. We looked at three individuals at different stages of the profiling process. All could respond to simple and familiar instructions with one key word, and all used a few single signs, words and gestures expressively.

Jon had been using MMP for about one year. He was in his late twenties, and had Lowe's syndrome. Jon's use of the profile was relatively advanced: he could choose to play snippets of video, select a picture from multiple images, had some sense of how to navigate within the

system and showed active signs of interest and involvement, sharing information with others by looking and/or vocalising. For example, when viewing a video of himself in a preferred activity (such as gardening), he would touch the video and turn to his keyworker. Analysis of Jon's attention during the session showed that it was equally divided between the computer and the keyworker.

Maria was in her late twenties with visual impairments, caused by cataracts. She lives in a residential home. She had been using Multimedia profiling for about one year, and was at an *intermediate* level - showing some clear awareness of the process. For example, when she came in the room, she would move to the video camera and look at it with interest, and would look towards the computer suggesting and expectation of the programme. MMP had also been used successfully in a review meeting - when the images were displayed, Maria had looked and pointed at the screen and cried "Me!" - the first time she had ever participated in such an event.

Lorna was in her mid thirties. She had been using MMP for a few months and was beginning to show some selective responses to some aspects of the catalogue, such as pictures and sound of people that she knew. In comparison to other sessions, where Lorna's main focus of attention was social, she showed a higher level of attention to the medium, suggesting that the sound and dynamic visual images, with the potential for control, offered her a real opportunity for learning.

These short case studies illustrate the gradual increase in skill over a protracted period of time that seems to be typical for users of MMP. This is not a quick fix solution, but that in itself appears to be beneficial, as both staff and service users build up their confidence and competence and their awareness of each other. Staff, when interviewed, were extremely positive about the progress made by service users, and about the impact on their own professional development.

It's an effective tool for those who are hardest to engage – the facility for repeat playing means that user gets enough opportunity to pay attention to it.

When the screen is in the room, users will go and sit in front of it, to show they want to use the catalogue – the message is I want to do this . This doesn't happen outside MMP sessions.

It has helped develop self awareness for P (service user). He will go to self care and have his hair done, and then come to be videoed.

It brings together all the different parts of a user's life in one accessible format. It reinforces "this is me!" The most important feature of MMP is that it includes everyone. Potentially, users can be better manipulators of equipment than staff, so that they are the ones with knowledge and skills. This is a role reversal from most situations.

Reviewing videos allows us to see what has been missed during live interactions – so a user's communication efforts are more likely to be recognised over time. You are constantly finding things out that normally pass you by.

The catalogue helps us to check we all agree about what is happening. It's a lot easier to demonstrate than to try to write down the particular sounds that Jon makes in a way that others will understand – when you can see and hear it, there's no argument. It provides good evidence of what you are working on at the time.

These skills (camera operation, computer use, developing portfolios) are transferable and valid in the workplace.

It makes the working life more interesting.

It's like a breath of fresh air – it feels really contemporary and exciting and entertaining – it's really helped people to be enthusiastic.

Application across the range of ability

The three individuals we studied were deliberately chosen because their responses would be easy to observe. However, MMP has been used successfully with people who are nonverbal, and functioning at a very early level of development. For example, with Susan, who had dual sensory impairment, and therefore limited awareness of the images, the approach was still useful since the process allowed staff to gather together positive representations and information which could be used to train people how to provide her with effective support.

Comparisons with other media.

Appropriate use of the technology is very important. Because MMP is so powerful, it's tempting to jettison other kinds of technology in its favour. We compared the reactions of service users to MMP, video and photographs, and found that each medium had its advantages for particular activities and contexts. For example, photos were useful in groups, where they could be picked up and handled - Maria was able to give out pictures to group members, promoting social interaction. Video was useful for a group to sit and watch together, recalling key events. MMP offered unrivalled advantages for individual work, however, in the close focus, dynamic images and sounds that are under user control, and the relevance and interest of the material.

Looking to the future

There is renewed energy and commitment to the process of person centred planning, choice and self determination in services for people with learning disabilities, and a recognition of the need to engage those with severe communication difficulties, not just the more able amongst us. Multimedia Profiling is not a universal panacea, and will not solve all the problems, but has proved to be a flexible and powerful tool which really does centre on the individual.

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Note: thanks to staff and service users in Chelsea and Westminster who helped on the project; Pippa and Laurie Martin who collected and analysed data, and Nick Weldin, Paddington Arts.

Mencap are piloting the use of MMP in services in the York district, from January 2004.

Acting Up provides training and information about Multimedia Profiling. Contact John Laidle.....

Building the foundation for Information and Communication Technology (ICT): a teaching and learning development

For the past 18 months at Sunfield School – a 52 week residential special school for students with profound Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and/or Complex and Profound Learning Difficulties (CPLD) – we have embarked on a quest to bring ICT into the everyday lives of our young people: to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum; to enable valid input into accredited schemes and to enable staff to utilise technology to ensure a qualitative improvement regarding their input into the student experience; but most of all, a quest to make ICT accessible, in a 'real' way, to the student group.

Whilst I am aware that our achievements so far have merely brought us into line with many Local Education Authority (LEA) schools in terms of ICT application, our experiences may serve to demonstrate the way barriers and preconceptions can be broken down in a manner that allows for no drifting into the common practices of piecemeal use and fluctuating standards across a school site.

I am also aware that current thinking within Special Educational Need (SEN), as regards the best ICT practice, is shifting away from the discreet ICT curriculum to the direct support of the whole Curriculum through the use of 'high' technologies. This, however, must be preceded by a confidence among subject leaders and class teachers to meet the ICT requirements throughout their work – ICT has become as important as communication, literacy and numeracy in both the student and the teacher toolkit. Only if this latter concept can be achieved, can the use of 'high' technologies really flourish in our environments.

So how has Sunfield arrived at the point where the specialist teacher is able to plan the move across to high technology curriculum support? The answer is that we haven't actually, well, not quite. 18 months ago, the Head Teacher committed to a long term plan of improvement. The scenario was a common one: resources in classes being sporadic in their availability and under-employed because of a lack of knowledge and understanding amongst staff, and in consequence, unavailable to most students (although some were making, albeit uninspiring, use of equipment where more confident staff were involved).

An audit of school staff demonstrated a general lack of basic skills, an unedifying lack of SEN skills related to ICT and, amongst most teachers, a lack of understanding of the (potentially huge) use of ICT as a teaching and learning tool. ICT was not seen as a priority. This same scenario was discovered on a national scale, and had resulted in the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) initiative – essentially a programme to enskill all existing teachers with the same basic standards now required for trainee teachers. Sunfield - as an independent - had missed out on this initiative, which had exacerbated the general condition.

There is plenty of evidence available to highlight the priority that schools should be giving to the use of ICT to improve teaching and learning opportunities for students with SEN (Detheridge and Stevens 2001). The requirements set by the DfES, and the QCA guidance, deem certain opportunities to be made available – I used their documents to underpin and justify the proposed plans, which, in turn, allowed my Head Teacher to go to the Trustees for all necessary budgeting support.

As well as the teaching issues, it seemed that we were not making the most of technological systems which could enhance our professionalism, reduce bureaucracy and improve the teaching and learning at Sunfield in additional ways.

We decided on a four-way approach:

- to develop the systems which would improve the work of the school
- to implement immediate curriculum repair by refurbishing the existing (and inappropriate) ICT room with SEN hardware, software, a specialist teacher and an experienced assistant
- to refurbish all classrooms with the same (non-human) resources as the ICT room
- to implement a staff training programme which would ensure that staff used the new systems and that they all became confident ICT users.

All students were timetabled to attend discreet sessions in the ICT room, they had appropriate access and the ICT curriculum was being delivered. Our early observations included the apparent absence of 'behavioural incidents', distracted students became firmly focused and many who had had anxieties dominating their day were visibly relaxing at the workstations. This is all anecdotal – and old news to many I guess – but it seems that there may be three key benefits to the use of ICT by those with ASD: educational, recreational and therapeutic. The positive effect on the students was immediate. I have not tried to detail here the nature of the relationship between students with SEN and computers – I assume that all readers will by now accept, defacto, the positive existence of that; but also I am certain that I am only just beginning to experience the enormity of the potentiality of using computers to assist in the development and well-being of students with SEN, and particularly, in our case, ASD.

The appointment of a dedicated support assistant has enabled us in many ways: we were able to continue to provide the planned sessions when I was called upon to commit the necessary, and inevitable, time to deliver the four strands of the overall development; it has provided us with a member of staff who, by working closely with a teacher, has come to understand the subtle differences between providing a valuable experience for the student, and providing a valuable, curriculum led, learning experience for the student; it has given us another member of staff who is able and confident to lead her colleagues in training and it has given me the confidence to drive ICT forward, whilst relying on her to maintain the improved standards we have set.

Our initial choice of the new hardware set-ups (replicated across all classrooms) has been flawed, not least by the need to utilise equipment purchased some years previously and to match it with further purchases. I would hope to be able to overhaul this hardware in the next few years and some equipment will be replaced. Organisations such as Becta (www.becta.org.uk), NASEN (www.nasen.org.uk) and the Teacher Training Agency (www.tta.gov.uk) have supported development by providing free advice and links on-line, there is also an on-line forum for ICT within SEN called the 'SENIT forum' email 'senit@ngfl.gov.uk': other practitioners offer free advice and experience willingly...use the Net!

Of the chosen software, much of it will be well known amongst SEN practitioners, but I have been particularly pleased with the purchase of 2simple's 'Infant Video Toolkit' - a best seller (top 10 bestsellers – Times Educational Supplement) in primary schools and described as 'Microsoft Office for Kids'. It is hugely appropriate, with switching consideration, for core skills work within the P levels*. I expect this to become a familiar tool in all our classrooms. I will not espouse our use of Widgit's 'Writing With Symbols' software, as I believe this has widespread recognition; except to acknowledge that, with the appropriate technology - and in particular, its functionality to import images - it can offer outstanding opportunities for the development of literacy and communication for **all** non-word readers.

The systems development has necessarily been carried out on a trial and error basis: we are fortunate to have ICT technical support and there were systems that were already in place which we have gradually refined and redesigned to meet the specific needs of the school (the technical support is, in my opinion, a must. The teacher has a serious and demanding curriculum role which must be prioritized over functional involvement). Amongst other initiatives, an assessment, recording and reporting database - Quality On Line (QOL) has been purchased (we believe it will have a massive, and immediate, impact on the teaching and learning at Sunfield); a digital

photographic library (which forms a consistent and efficient 'dictionary' for non word or symbol users) has been made available through the internal network to complement and broaden our use of symbols, as mentioned; planning, recording and other documents have been made available in a similar way using templates; and network 'spaces' have been assigned for everything and everyone.

To tie all of this development together we have devised a staff training package to cover all of the above: the three strands were Core (professional), SEN specific (curriculum) and Organisational (systems), with a further 'advanced skills' for teachers to be addressed in-house, where possible, or targeted external training where not. We sought not to repeat the mistakes of NOF training by assessing the basic skills of staff and addressing those first.

Essentially, the commitment of the Head Teacher was backed up with the funding for equipment upgrades and cover for a significant block of teacher time – 8 teachers every week for a half day – plus the ICT specialist leading the training! This was achieved by goodwill, some juggling and a deal of supply costs. The assistant training is continuing during other meeting times and constitutes an approximate 75% coverage of the teacher course. In truth, the students have had their contact time with ICT staff reduced over the initial 12 month period, but the level remained acceptable and the overall benefit has been hugely in their favour. After the initial surge, we have settled for time set aside for the ICT specialist to support staff and address 'holes' in individual's understanding; as well as picking up induction training with new teaching staff.

The present now looks positive for students: a peek into our classrooms will almost always view the computer being utilised – sometimes a student independently enjoying a favoured activity, sometimes a member of staff preparing a valuable resource, but hopefully, and more pertinently, a student working with a member of staff engaged in a, much improved, teaching and learning experience.

The future may also prove very interesting: ours is a residential site with various other departments who need to engage in a very similar procedure: by leading the development in other areas, it should provide Education with a valuable opportunity to promote aspects of the teaching and learning culture within other disciplines, as well as giving us an all-too-rare insight into the valuable ideas that exist beyond the classroom and into the 24hour curriculum.

Rob Smith

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- * Please note that this does present difficulties for students below level P4, although with supported/switch access it can be adapted).

References

Detheridge, T., Stevens, C., 'Information and Communication Technology', in Carpenter, B. *et al* (eds) *Enabling Access: Effective Teaching and Learning for Pupils with Learning Difficulties*, 2nd edition. London: David Fulton Publications.

Recommended resources:

QOL – Contact Paul Leach of Quality On Line Ltd DBIC, Ten Pound Walk, Doncaster, DN4 5HX
Tel: +44 (0)1302 554950 Fax: +44 (0)1302 554 996 Web: www.quality-on-line.co.uk - pleach@quality-on-line.co.uk

2simple (for Infant Video toolkit and others) – 2simple Software, 3-4 Sentinel Square, Brent Street, Hendon, London NW4 2EL Tel: 02082031781, info@2simple.com, www.2simple.com

Writing With Symbols 2000 – www.widgit.co.uk

The Communication Aids Project CAP

In 2001 the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) approached Becta* with a proposal to develop a programme of support for school age pupils who need technology to support them in their communication and in gaining access to the curriculum.

The main issues to address were to:

- provide individuals with appropriate technology which addressed their particular needs
- support and enhance what had already been provided but not to replace the statutory obligations of LEAs
- ensure the equipment used by pupils continued to be available at key points such as when they transferred from primary to secondary school
- work with other groups who provided ICT to learners with disabilities (such as the Learning Skills Council (LSC)) developing a more coherent and consistent system of provision from pre school to post school provision

As thinking developed, it became clear that it was important that whatever system we devised, fitted into and capitalized on current practice. Where this provision was already being made, at school, LEA or national level, we enhanced that provision with a flexible system that all providers could tap into and prospective providers were encouraged to develop their own provision. It was also key, because of the source of funding, that the bulk of the money went on equipment for children and that we did not soak up funds by creating an expensive and cumbersome administration

The first thing was to identify some expert groups in this field that could provide a backbone of provision and quality assurance system for delivery and cover the full range of disabilities which lead to communication difficulties. We knew that there was a well developed network of groups working across this field.

- The Aids to Communication in Education (ACE) Centres in Oxford and Oldham which worked with learners with physical disabilities and communication difficulties.
- A Partnership of CEMAC and The Wolfson centre at the Great Ormond Street Hospital covering a wide range of students across London.
- Abilitynet which is a national organization working with people who have difficulty with written communication.
- BATOD the professional association of teachers of the deaf which had a great deal of experience of the communication needs of the deaf and hard of hearing.
- SCOPE which is active in lobbying for and meeting the needs of pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning disabilities.

These centres were never seen as simply providing an assessment service. They were all tasked with working alongside schools and LEAs to develop awareness and skills of teachers and support assistants in using technology to empower pupils. The end product was not more work for the centres, but a more skilled and confident network of professionals using technology to give pupils a voice and enable them to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding.

The CAP project was born. The Department secured funding of £10 million over 2 years from 2002 to 2004. A system of assessment, recommendation of provision and purchase of equipment recommended was devised, and the project delivered its first technology to a pupil in April 2002.

Since then it has been a steep learning curve for everyone involved, being new ground, we have made our share of mistakes and not always felt satisfied with our efforts. However overall

a year and a half on we do feel we are beginning to make an impact in line with our original vision.

We have provided around 3000 children with ICT for their personal use (some of which have profound learning disability) and each of these has had an individual assessment, had learning targets set and in most cases received some training in the use of the equipment. We have run three formal invitations to tender to be suppliers of equipment to the project and spent over £7million on hardware and software. We have a website CAP Website <http://www.becta.org.uk/cap> which probably has the biggest catalogue of communication equipment in the world. The site is about to launch some exciting new developments to enable communication aids users, their teachers and carers to discuss issues using email and the web. We have a well developed system of provision using six Centres all of which are developing networks of assessors and contacts in schools and LEAs. There are two videos promoting the project and the power of technology to support pupils with communication needs.

This has all been achieved with the full participation of the six centres and with a central administrative team of just six people.

It has been an exciting time for CAP with successes such as the child who had received a Dynavox and for the first time, when he went to hospital, could really tell his doctors how he was feeling and "where it hurt" and the child who had become totally confident that his new laptop would mean his dream of going to university would become a reality.

Our funding has now been extended and we can now think about the next two years. Our emphasis will be on a range of activities:

- Developing further opportunities for training. Before the project ends we are aware of the need to continue supporting teachers and others in developing their skills in this field and we will be looking at the provision of distance learning and highlighting face to face training opportunities.
- Developing contacts and on-line communities where practitioners, students and pupils, and carers can share their experiences and offer peer support
- Working with other providers to smooth transition, particularly after statutory school age, and develop a more consistent approach to ICT provision
- Take on board recommendations from the independent evaluation of the project which is underway at the moment
- Plan for life after CAP and ensure the legacy we leave means that provision and use of technology with pupils is enhanced

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** Becta's purpose is to support the transformation of education through the exploitation and embedding of technology in learning and teaching, in educational organisations, and in developing wider education networks and systems. We are the Government's key partner in the development and delivery of its Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and e-learning strategy for schools and the learning and skills sector.*

Becta has five strategic aims which are to:

- *improve learning and teaching through the effective and embedded use of ICT*
- *increase the number of educational organizations making effective, innovative and sustainable use of ICT*
- *improve the availability and use of high quality educational content*
- *develop a coherent, sustainable and dependable ICT infrastructure for education*
- *continuously improve Becta's ability to deliver.*

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Using a Laptop Computer and Projector in a Multi-Sensory Room

When it was decided that a new Multi—sensory room was needed at The Foreland School, a total budget of £100,000 was set. This included a sum of approximately £70,000 to build the room, leaving £3000 to spend on equipping it. Much of this money was raised for us by a variety of groups, including parents, staff and charities.

In order that this large amount of money was spent wisely, we needed to be very sure exactly what we wanted to get out of the room. At an early stage of planning, we therefore held consultations with staff at which we discussed what features and facilities we wanted to have. We then invited representatives from a number of companies to come to talk to us about how they could equip the room in order to help us meet our requirements.

There are many companies offering Sensory Room design and installation, and we wanted to be fully in control of the process so that we ended up with a facility that enabled us to meet our goals for our pupils rather than have a wonderful hi-tech facility which we then had to decide how to use. We chose the company that seemed most prepared to listen to our requirements and suggested equipment that met these rather than try to sell us their latest innovation.

During this planning stage, it was recognised that the room would need to have a mixture of low and high tech equipment. We were shown a variety of complex high tech systems that although initially appearing wonderful, would have proved complex to programme and adapt, particularly once a lesson was running. We realised that we wanted staff to be able to control what was happening with equipment, determined by pupils' responses, at a very local level, with perhaps several activities happening within the room at once. The more complex programmed control systems would have precluded this type of work. An example of the type of flexibility needed is in visual tracking work, when a member of staff would want to be able to adjust the speed and direction of the light source and the zone of movement, depending on the pupil's responses, which could vary from day to day or even within the lesson. Obviously, in order to have this type of control, the member of staff needs to be able to move the light source directly themselves.

However, it was pointed out by many staff that they also wanted the room to have a "wow" factor and to be able to undertake work in it which would not be possible using more low-tech facilities. In particular, we wanted to explore the use of the room as a sensory studio that could be used to enhance drama type activities. As well as the more normal type of equipment such as bubble tubes and effects projectors, it was decided from an early stage to put a laptop computer and video projector into the room. This would allow images from the computer to be projected onto the wall on one side of the room, with the image being approximately 2 metres high. The effect in a darkened room is dramatic and is just like being in a small cinema. In fact, it can be used as just that, with DVD movies being played on the computer and displayed on the wall, the sound output being connected to the room's sound system. Many pupils who have never been able to go to the cinema are spell-bound by the larger than life moving images.

However, we have been able to use the computer and projector in a variety of other ways, with pupils who have a variety of learning needs. By bringing a long extension cable from the computer, across the ceiling and down the wall to a junction box by the side of the projected image, it is possible to plug in a USB mouse, keyboard or switch box, as required, to be operated by the pupils who are taking part in the lesson. This enables a wide variety of computer software to be run, and controlled by pupils and displayed on a scale never before

possible, in a distraction free environment. Simple cause and effect software can be activated by the switch and has an impact far beyond that achievable in a classroom environment given the scale of image and quality of sound possible when presented in this way. Similarly, pupils operating Talking Stories such as Oxford Reading Tree can feel they are control of a movie, with the character on the screen that they are animating by clicking on being virtually life-sized.

We are not limited to using commercially available activities. With the advent of software such as Clicker, it has long been possible to create individual switch or mouse-controlled activities that combine text, pictures, sound and video. A recent multi-media project involved pupils searching on the internet for pictures of spaceships, stars and planets and incorporating these into a slideshow on the computer that depicted a journey through space. Pupils were able to move from one image to the next by pressing a switch. Similar slideshows could easily be made on any theme currently being worked on.

A further use of the computer and projector has been as part of a multi-media drama activity utilising a variety of equipment within the room. As part of a quest to find and defeat a wizard, pupils have to combat a dragon, which is brought to life through a section of a DVD film projected on the wall. Later, pupils enter the wizard's lair, situated in the Ultra Violet light corner of the room, adding eerie glowing frogs and lizards (simple fluorescent toys) to a potion in a cauldron. All the while, suitably atmospheric music and sound-effects play on the sound system, adding to the potent atmosphere. At the end of the session, pupils are slowly brought back into the real world by the playing of "happy" music and gradually bringing light levels up to daylight levels. In another similar activity, pupils experienced being at Hogwarts School through a mixture of film, props and story-telling.

By incorporating the computer and projector into our multi-sensory room, we are able to offer a wider range of activities than would otherwise have been possible, being able to develop new activities reflecting current topics and bringing more established computer activities to life in a fresh and dramatic way. We are able to devise engrossing interactive activities that draw on pupils' interests and can be participated in by all at a variety of levels.

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Facilitating the development of friendships for pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties

I work in a school for pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD). There are 72 pupils on the roll of which approximately 18 have profound and/or multiple learning difficulties. Two classes within the school cater exclusively for 13 of these pupils, the remaining five are integrated into the classes for pupils with SLD. One class caters for pupils from the age of 7 to 13, and the second (upper school) class caters for the pupils from the age of 13 to school leaving age, which for the majority of pupils is 18 or 19 years of age. The pupils in the two special classes have multiple special needs such as visual or hearing impairments, coupled with learning difficulties which place their general school achievements being assessed within P levels 1-4. The majority also have significant mobility problems in terms of both fine and gross motor skills.

The Chambers Dictionary defines 'friend' as "Someone whom one knows and likes, and to whom one shows loyalty and affection, a close or intimate acquaintance." This definition may cause some difficulty in relation to pupils with limited communicative ability who may not be able to clearly express preferences for people, or whose expression of meaning may be misunderstood. A pupil with very profound difficulties may not have the ability to show loyalty and affection, or to indicate understanding of another person as being a person, with whom they might have or develop an acquaintanceship, whether close, intimate or more casual.

One may consider that in the face of these difficulties we should not address this particular issue. Gilbert MacKay says "The attitude of 'nothing can be done' is easy to understand because intellectual, communicative and multiple disabilities present great challenges to families, professionals and, of course, the individuals themselves." (MacKay 2002, p.159) but the view that pupils with PMLD are not capable of developing and maintaining friendships is not, I would contend, a valid one. Most pupils in a mainstream reception class cannot read independently, but activities are undertaken for them to share reading with an adult, to look at and begin to recognize letters, to begin to see the connections between the phonic sounds and the grapheme representation and through all these activities the ability to read independently develops. In the same way we have the opportunity to structure opportunities and activities to assist pupils with PMLD to begin to develop relationships. If we confined ourselves solely to activities which we consider that our pupils have the ability to complete unaided then the school lives of those pupils would be bereft of virtually all educational activities. As we acknowledge a pupil's right to take part in a literacy lesson and to contribute to that lesson in whatever way they are able, we should recognize that a pupil has a right, and perhaps a need to develop and sustain friendships. Their contribution to such a relationship, no matter how diverse that contribution is, should be recognized and valued. Our aim should be to provide an impetus for the pupil with PMLD to develop social communication and relationships. We can provide opportunities for this to happen and strategies to bridge difficulties.

We may find it difficult to judge an appropriate level for our friendly approaches to a person with PMLD. Playing a hide and appear game may be appropriate with a fourteen month old child, but may not be appropriate for a pupil with PMLD who is fourteen years old. Yet we may consider that the cognitive stage of a pupil is an equally important consideration and it may, at times, be more important to use an activity or resource which is cognitively rather than chronologically appropriate. It is important to retain a balance between using items or activities which motivate the person, without leaving that person in a position where they may be ridiculed for their attachment to items which other members of society may consider inappropriate for them. If we contend that we value all people, that we should also respect the value which they place on a resource or activity.

There are people with PMLD who have difficulties with recognition of people and the concept of object permanence. If these skills are prerequisites to forming relationships this does have implications for our work, but "this should not discourage parents and practitioners from providing opportunities for people with PMLD to form close relationships." (Ouvry 1998, p.69) We must never allow ourselves to be discouraged, for a belief that we can make a difference is at the heart of all teaching. However, we do face issues which could be seen as barriers, but which should perhaps be viewed as challenges.

One challenge lies in interpreting the communicative intent of the person with PMLD, and of deciding the best level of our own communication to suit the needs of the person concerned. A friendship is a two way process. Most are built around a basis that one party will at times have a greater need to talk and to be listened to, but this tends to be balanced by other times when they take on the role of listener. It is vital that the contributions of both parties are valued. Teachers or other practitioners need to be clear about their own communicative behaviour in attempting to develop interactions with a pupil with PMLD, but more important than this is the interpretation of the communicative efforts of the person with PMLD.

In a school for pupils with severe learning difficulties the primary aim for the majority of pupils from their first entry into the education system is increasing communicative ability, and for many pupils this will take forms other than standard speech. Parents and carers can become very adept at interpreting sounds to have regular meaning for a child, and consistent interpretation of body language and perhaps simple forms of sign language may be used. Pictures have long been used in our schools to aid communication and may be added to the top of a simple recording device such as a bigMac to enable pupils to press a switch to contribute their communication. We have a duty to create the time necessary to check out interpretations, for example when offering choices based on pictures or photographs we take care to move pictures round to ensure that pupils are truly communicating their desire for a particular object or snack rather than merely always selecting the picture presented on the dominant side. Perhaps, though, the first really essential guide to listening to pupils with PMLD is to listen with our eyes. Pupils with PMLD may communicate using eye pointing; but we can also observe languages such as facial expressions, visible signs of tension in the body, 'drawing away' or excited, happy movements. It does take time, consistency and effort to listen to pupils with PMLD but this is essential if friendships are to be developed.

In schools and units where pupils with PMLD are educated separately from their peers they have the double segregation of being in a special unit within a special school. The decision to have these special classes may be based on practical issues such as access to buildings or availability of equipment, on safety issues, or on curricular provision. The effect, though, is to create a subgroup and a problem here arises in terms of creating friendships with other pupils. David Fontana is actually discussing pupils in a mainstream school when he says "The difficulties faced by verbally impoverished children are often made worse, for example, by the fact that throughout their school career they tend to mix primarily with other children who share their verbal disadvantage. Their lack of verbal skills make it hard for them to form close friendships with more articulate children." (Fontana 1988, p.29).

The point is equally valid when looking at pupils with PMLD. Friendships are unlikely to form on a random basis where all the pupils have PMLD. Although staff can assist by considering pupil preferences when arranging seating in the classroom, what is really needed is contact with more able pupils to provide an opportunity to begin to make friends, the verbal and social advantages which these pupils have will enable them to take the larger role in a growing friendship. For this reason it is necessary to ensure that sufficient opportunities exist for pupils with PMLD to mix with more able peers.

With this point in mind I began to examine the existing integration within the school in which I teach. Pupils with PMLD join the whole school for assemblies once a week, and in their own department once a week. Two pupils from a special PMLD class sit at the table of an SLD class for lunch, and various pupils with PMLD join other classes for one teaching session a week. There is

also a whole school day trip approximately annually. Closer inspection showed that during assembly the pupils with PMLD occupy one area of the hall which is left clear to accommodate wheelchairs. On whole school trips pupils with PMLD tend to travel separately, in wheelchair accessible vehicles. A scheme in which some SLD pupils were encouraged to come and interact with the lower and middle school pupils with PMLD in their designated playground was discontinued due to low numbers of school meals supervisory assistants (SMSAs). Although a few of the pupils with PMLD were included in one or two teaching sessions a week with other classes, these opportunities take place only within a structured session and, as Coupe O'Kane and Goldbart argue "the organized and well run class room is not a good place to learn to communicate or to affect your environment" (Coupe, O'Kane and Goldbart 1998, p33). I decided that what was needed was increased opportunities for integration including some periods which were not structured teaching sessions, but rather sessions where pupils had opportunities to interact with each other in a less structured way.

I circulated a brief questionnaire to all classes in the school. To test my hypothesis that pupils in PMLD classes had fewer friendships than their peers in ordinary classes, the first question asked teachers to judge how many friends they felt each pupil had. The second question asked the teachers to find out whether the pupils would be interested in joining a lunchtime club, and type of club which they would like to take part in. The results showed that the pupils in SLD classes generally had between 'two to three' friends, but the two teachers who taught PMLD classes said that they didn't feel that the pupils in their classes had any friends or could make decisions about lunchtime clubs.

I decided on two strategies to increase integration opportunities for pupils with PMLD and through this to encourage the development of friendships. The first was to alter seating arrangements in the dining hall and the second to trial a lunchtime club. These efforts concentrated on the lunchtime period in order to utilize the more informal settings of eating lunch in the dining room and the lunchtime play period.

The two pupils with PMLD who already had lunch with SLD classes made a good start, but as a next step I decided to try to arrange for some of the pupils with SLD to come to the tables for pupils with PMLD. I gave careful thought to which classes I felt it would be most appropriate to approach. I needed pupils who were on the whole equipped with good socialization skills and I felt it was important to avoid classes where there existed a high incidence of challenging behaviours, or the very youngest pupils where the teaching of appropriate eating behaviours was a priority during the meal times. I chose a class of pupils at Key Stage 3 whose teacher was happy to help and she immediately asked her class who would like to join in.

The results of the new seating arrangements in the dining were very positive. The pupils with SLD were all very keen to join the table which the class with PMLD used, with more volunteers than seats. It was necessary to change some rules, and where pupils had needed to be told in the past "don't talk so much and get on with your lunch" we were now encouraging them to chat and interact with the pupils with PMLD. A useful side effect of the experiment was to make lunchtime helpers more aware of the needs of the pupils at the table.

The second strategy was to set up a lunchtime club. My decision to use Information Communication Technology (ICT) was based on the results of the questionnaire, and on my belief that for many pupils the use of computers and other modern toys can be intrinsically motivating. Also, information technology is essential to our communication systems, industry and "at a personal level, ICT is also taking an increasingly important role, filtering into the everyday life of the whole of the western world". (Detheridge and Stevens 2001, p.159). Since the use of ICT is such an important part of the life of so many people it is important that this should also be true for pupils with PMLD, perhaps even more so when we consider how the use of ICT can assist these pupils to take a more active role in communicating with others and in participating in the world around them.

I obtained permission from the Headteacher and governors to ask the ICT technician for his help. The club was to run on Wednesdays, when the technician is in school, between 12.45 and 1.15, when all the pupils have finished eating and before afternoon lessons begin. I planned to staff the club myself, with very small numbers to begin with, and to ask for SMSA support as numbers were increased.

I discovered that none of the computers in the ICT suite were equipped with either a switch or touch screen, and therefore could not be accessed by any pupil who could not operate a mouse or keyboard. The ICT suite is small and cramped and I decided that I would initially have to use my own classroom. For the first session I invited two pupils from a class for pupils with PMLD and two from a class for pupils with SLD. All were at Key Stage 3 and initially I felt that I could not afford to be too inclusive; I chose pupils from the SLD class who I knew to have well developed social and ICT skills and pupils from the PMLD class who I felt were interested in other people and the world around them.

A number of problems immediately became apparent: the presence of members of my own class disrupted the setting up process; trailing extension leads presented health and safety issues and I did not allow enough time to set up the machines, and all technology loves to go wrong when you are in a hurry! In spite of these problems the four pupils invited seemed to enjoy the session. I had managed to set up two computers and one play station, and although I felt that I had not provided enough variety, I did feel that the club had begun to achieve its aims in terms of the mixing of pupils from the two classes.

My next priority was to find somewhere within the school more suitable for the club. Fortunately I discovered that the post sixteen class had a room which already had two computers, plenty of sockets and was free every Wednesday. This also solved the next problem – having enough uninterrupted time to set up the machines – which I was able to do while two LSAs completed the lunchtime tasks. During the next three weeks I expanded the number of activities on offer and added a couple of free standing ICT games designed for younger pupils but appropriate to the cognitive abilities of the pupils with PMLD, which were interesting enough for the other pupils to want to join in. One of the most successful games which we used was *Scream Alley*, a ten pin bowling game based on the film *Monsters Inc.* To complete the game it is necessary to press the space bar then to 'steer' the bowling ball from left to right using the arrow keys. This worked well because the pupils with PMLD were able to press the space bar with only minimal help, the other pupils steered the ball left and right. The exciting sound effects pleased all pupils, and I was thrilled to see two pupils playing in this interactive and co-operative way.

Another very good result was when Vivien (a pupil with SLD) was using a play station game watched closely by Martin, a pupil with PMLD. Vivien caused the character 'Croc' to jump up and down on a box until it exploded in a shower of sparks. The sound effects were good, and Martin, seeing what had happened, began to applaud Vivien's actions. Another pupil, Arturo, claps frequently during the ICT club, but this is a much more generalized indication of pleasure and interest, and does not appear to be related to specific actions. So, by closely observing the pupils during the club we are able to evaluate to what degree they are interacting with both the other pupils and the resources provided.

The progress of the club in the succeeding weeks highlighted the resources which we needed. Some were easy to provide, such as dycem to keep table top toys more stable, or making more space for wheelchairs by moving tables out of the room. Others were more difficult and still need to be done, such as the purchase of new games and the acquisition of a second play station, controllers and television.

I had set up the club with the precept firmly in my mind that leisure is not the same as work. The Chambers Dictionary defines leisure as "Time when one is free to relax and do as one wishes." I aimed to provide pupils with unstructured time when they could enjoy playing and mixing with other pupils, unfettered by a teacher's fairly rigid ideas of time and learning objectives. I was also

determined that the pupils with PMLD would have the opportunity to take part by using a simple program with a single switch, but that they would not be repeatedly encouraged to press the switch, because that would be too similar to an ICT lesson. However I did find myself saying to a pupil with SLD "No, you've only just started using that game – you can't just flit around the room" and having to stop halfway as I realized that yes, that was exactly what he could do, because that made it different from ICT lessons in his own classroom.

The ICT club was oversubscribed each week. Several pupils from the SLD classes began to ask if they could come, and the pupils from the PMLD classes expressed their interest by facial and bodily expressions.

My criteria in evaluating the success of the two strategies was to consider whether actual opportunities for integration between the two pupil groups was increased, and while I felt that this had been achieved there are further steps which I think should be taken. One of these is to develop an object of reference for the club to enable the pupils from the PMLD classes to express an opinion before being taken to the club. Also in the long term the school has plans to be re-sited on a campus with a mainstream secondary school and college, which should give increased opportunities for integration. During the coming year I would like to try to set up an integration opportunity for our pupils with PMLD and mainstream pupils by inviting groups to come into school to take part in specific activities. I would also like to set up a second lunchtime club so that pupils have a choice of clubs, and the pupils with PMLD would be able to use an object of reference to indicate their preference for one club over another. I would also like to increase the opportunities for all the pupils to enjoy lessons and leisure time in school together. The Special Schools Working Group Report states "This work has not just been about locational integration ... but to develop the inclusive cultures and practices that enable children not just to be present but also to participate." (Special Groups Working Group Report 2003, p.51)

In conclusion it is vital that teachers and care givers of persons with PMLD never succumb to the belief that certain opportunities, such as those to develop and maintain friendships, are not open to this group of people. Yes, there are challenges and these should be addressed with initiative and imagination. Above all we need to see the person first, and tailor opportunities suitable for that person's age and interests. There is still much work to do in order to ensure that people with PMLD have the opportunity to take a full and active part in every aspect of life. We are able to take steps to improve the opportunities for friendships for people with PMLD, and I believe it is both our role and responsibility to do so.

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Multisensory Environments and High Technology: A Macro-Perspective

'Technology helps students with disabilities uncover and release an intellectual potential that has been buried under layers of frustration and emotional conflict.' (Holzberg, 1994, p. 20)

Introduction

If we define technology as the intentional manipulation of the environment to achieve a purpose (Pinning down the technology definition, 2003), then multisensory environments (MSEs) are clearly forms of technology themselves. They are environments specifically designed for the purposes of relaxation, leisure, engagement, sense development and learning (Pagliano, 1997). MSEs also house a collection of technological equipment which enables stimulation to be "controlled, manipulated, intensified, reduced, presented in isolation or combination, packaged for active or passive interaction, and temporally matched to fit the perceived motivation, interests, leisure, relaxation, therapeutic and/or educational needs of the user" (Pagliano, 1998, p. 107). The term 'high' is used to describe technology that is particularly sophisticated and innovative. Examples of high technology in the MSE include switches that enable users with profound disability to operate a diverse range of equipment in order to provide exciting multisensory rewards, built environment designs that enable more active user participation and interaction by using for example, computers, digital cameras, videos, closed circuit television, DVDs, sound beam and virtual reality. High technology equipment on the horizon will incorporate motion capture and analysis devices (Motek, 2003; Motion Analysis, 2003) and the mind switch (Mind Switch, 2003).

A model to assist decision-making

My aim in this paper is to present a model that assists decision-making when choosing and using high technology equipment and methods within the MSE. The model provides a macro-perspective. It is based on a notion of fundamental importance, that the MSE is built from the user out and that the user provides the basis for the design. The choice of MSE equipment is therefore, primarily determined by the capabilities, interests and personality of the user.

The MSE is a multifunctional or 'open-minded' space. Its multifunctionality is achieved when a core of twelve prototypes, each with a specialist purpose, are combined in various permutations and combinations to fit the individual needs of individual users (Pagliano, 1998).

'The physical forms of the MSE include: the white room (relaxation); the grey room (stimulus reduction); the dark room (visual stimulation); the sound space (auditory stimulation); the interactive area (cause and effect); the water area (proprioceptive stimulation); the soft play environment (risk and safety); the portable environment (transportable comfort zone or activity centre), and the virtual environment (for experiences not normally possible for individuals with a disability). Psychosocial forms include the inclusive area (for environments that facilitate the child with a disability being included with nondisabled children); the pluralist environment (to embrace diversity), and the social space (to develop social skills). The hybrid MSE comprises a synthesis of two or more features of the 12 design prototypes. The hybrid MSE is therefore designed to maximise design flexibility so that each educator working in the MSE can redesign the space to fit the precise individual needs of the children in their session.' (p. 34)

The MSE is not just a space. "There's the actual space - the physical environment - and then there's the impact on the students - with this impact being different for each student" (Pagliano, 1999, p. 3). The model to assist decision-making when designing and using high technology in

the MSE (see Figure 1) takes into account these manifold aspects. The model consists of a pyramid of five interrelated strands: predicated know-how, MSE equipment, process, immediate outcomes, and long-term consequences. Every strand impacts on every other strand. The user is at the centre.

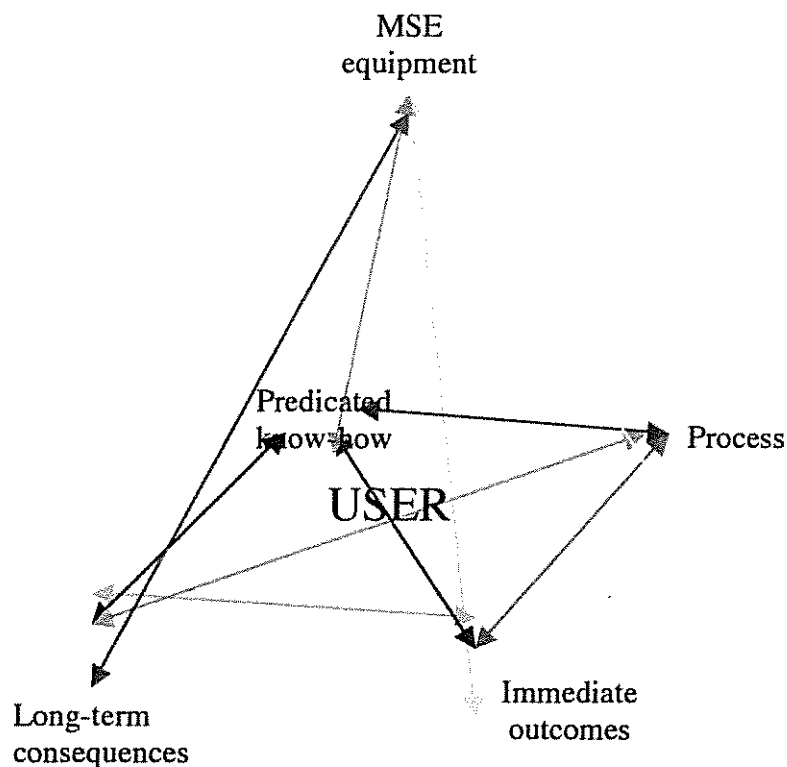


Figure 1: A model to guide decision-making when choosing and using high technology in the MSE

My particular remit is the student with profound multiple disability (PMLD) as the user.

Predicated know-how

Predicated know-how is the knowledge, expertise and experience the transdisciplinary team, MSE designers, users and facilitators, bring to the MSE. Know-how is acquired over time through:

- Learning from others through mentoring, by attending conferences, workshops, training sessions, reading the literature (Pagliano, 1999; 2001);
- Learning about particular equipment, possible uses (often from the sales person);
- Collaborating and networking with experts who have specialist discipline knowledge (teachers/specialist advisory teacher, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, speech language pathologist - these people form the basis of the transdisciplinary team that runs the MSE);
- Collaborating and networking with those that know the student best (student, parents, carers - these people are also on the transdisciplinary team). It is important to learn about the each user: abilities and disabilities, likes and preferences, personality;
- Feedback from evaluating equipment, by closely monitoring process, immediate outcomes and long term consequences and by engaging in critical reflection.

Equipment

Equip means "to furnish for service" (Shorter Oxford Dictionary, 3rd ed.). The MSE is equipped with a range of resources that enable the user to intentionally manipulate the environment to achieve a purpose. Four key services available in the MSE that make the environment more accessible for the user are: environmental compensations, adaptations, adjustments and modifications (Pagliano, 2001). Unless otherwise indicated (for example students who are totally blind would not require visual stimulation), the MSE should contain a balanced selection of environmental resources that specifically relate to the full range of sense abilities: proprioception (senses of body position - vestibular, muscle spindles, Golgi tendon organs) and exteroception (senses of external environment - gustatory, olfactory, tactual, auditory, visual) (Pagliano, 2001).

Decisions about which technology to include in the MSE are best made by the transdisciplinary team. It is suggested to begin by identifying and then to prioritise learning outcomes for each student scheduled to use the MSE. Balance is the key so it is important to have a wide focus and to include goals that relate to communication, physical development, functional skills and emotional wellbeing.

Technology may offer the promise of new levels of freedom and self-determination for individuals with PMLD but it is not a cure all. Before purchasing equipment it is vital to make certain your team critically evaluates the sales pitch, and collects evidence to inform and support the use of particular equipment. Be warned, claims may pander to wishful thinking, be fuelled by excessive hype or be promoted by unscrupulous sales people, so working together as a team is the best approach. Technology can and does increase levels of mobility, safety, independence, communication and access to information. However, this technology serves a limited market so often it is amongst the most expensive, and it is sometimes unnecessarily, even opportunistically expensive. It is therefore essential to weigh costs against potential benefits. It is also wise to consider the speed of technological change. An expensive item this year may be superseded by a much cheaper, more exciting item next year. Other factors are safety, upkeep and maintenance. Make certain there are staff members who will be able to keep the equipment in safe and good working condition and in-service staff on their effective use. Sometimes a big investment in one piece of equipment may result in the MSE not having money available for maintenance and repair.

Three particular concerns associated with the use of technology with students with PMLD are:

- A possible mismatch between expectations and reality. Often this boils down to a lack of adequate preparation. Staff must keep accurate records of their students and closely monitor student development using checklists and other forms of assessment so they know what the students are currently capable and not capable of achieving (Pagliano, 2001). Purchasing technology where there is a mismatch between expectations and reality is both careless and a waste of money.
- The inability of technology to normalise the lives of people with disabilities. The MSE is not able to normalise the lives of people with disabilities. MSE technology has the potential to enrich the lives of students with PMLD but it must not be used to deprive them of regular experiences in the outside world.
- Technology does not offer satisfactory solutions for all handicapping conditions. Facilitators must be alert to the fact that the MSE may not suit all users.

Having made these provisos and cautions, there is no doubt that the computer revolution has and will result in exciting spin-offs for MSE equipment.

Process

Sophisticated, high technology MSE equipment is only one part of the equation. It has to be used appropriately if desired learning outcomes are to be achieved.

Hulsegge and Verhuel (1986/7) stated that expertise was not absolutely necessary for a facilitator in the MSE - an unfortunate statement and one I strongly disagree with. The following is a cautionary tale that is not an isolated incident and is a legacy of their laissez-faire approach.

'On a random visit to the MSE I coordinate, I found two of my ex-students in there with their carers. To my utter dismay, the ex-students were lying on the waterbed doing nothing while their carers sat in the ball pool chatting about their boyfriends. I explained to the carers that there were many activities the two clients could be enjoying, provided they were given help to access them. I even offered to in-service them on how to use the equipment. The carers were completely uninterested and declined my offer stating they only had a few minutes left in the session anyway.'
(Wendy, personal communication)

In my opinion, just placing someone in the MSE without support is a total abdication of responsibility. These carers did not seem to understand that it was their responsibility to facilitate their client's engagement with the sensory world. Clearly they were not aware of the importance of process.

Process is the procedure. It is the way the MSE equipment is used. Process consists of a regular action or succession of actions that are carried out in a definite manner in order to achieve an outcome. Process usually begins with an invitation, where the student is asked whether he or she would like to go to the MSE. Once there, the student is then invited to choose which activity he or she would like to engage in. For individuals with communication problems this may require alternative or augmentative communication devices such as signs, communication symbols or photographs. There is a hierarchy to considering process, one that begins with physical presence in the MSE, then focuses on functional considerations, and then takes on more social aspects. Pagliano's (2001, p. 65) categorisation of pedagogical strategies helps facilitators guide the student to move from educator-led passive activities into more student-led, active activities. Careful monitoring and ongoing critical reflection by the transdisciplinary team are crucial to good process.

Immediate outcomes

In the education of students with PMLD there has been a change in focus from one of access to one of standards and accountability, from emphasising process alone to being driven by outcome. The design of the MSE and the MSE program begins with the identification of what the student needs to achieve.

'Accountability involves keeping a record of our actions. We do this by preparing a report or description of what we have been doing. This information is examined to identify advantages and disadvantages, and to make judgements to justify the value of the work we have been doing. It is the process by which we catalogue reasons to show how we have acted responsibly. We need this information to assist us to develop, monitor and review our education programmes, to improve our service, and to report to parents, caregivers, employers and the community at large.' (Pagliano, 2001, p. 86).

Long-term consequences

Daniels (1999) talked about the "lure of technology" arguing that

'The introduction of technology into an instructional context can transform the dynamics and patterns of the communication system as well as create possibilities for participation and thus for pathways to understanding. It also has the potential to act as a non-educational device for filling time and rendering passive those whose way of thinking and learning interrupts the flow of classrooms in which concern is more with 'getting through' or even entertaining rather than educating'. (p. vii)

Long-term consequences may be at a student level or a societal level. Both need to be carefully evaluated. The long-term consequences strand is woven into the other strands of the model, especially predicated know-how. For Hughes (1994) "A technological system can be both a cause and an effect; it can shape or be shaped by society. As they grow larger and more complex, systems tend to be more shaping of society and less shaped by it." Hughes calls this shaping of society "technological determinism" (p. 112). It is important to consider the ways the MSE might be shaping the lives of people with PMLD. We need to ask what is the cumulative effect of MSE experiences in their lives and is this cumulative effect positive or negative?

Conclusion

Both the MSE as high technology and the use of high technology in the MSE have exciting potential for students with PMLD. To realise this potential it is important to consider five interrelated strands: predicated know-how, equipment, process, immediate outcomes and long-term consequences. The MSE is built from the user out. To achieve the desired outcomes, close monitoring and critical reflection by the transdisciplinary team are crucial.

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AbilityNet - The UK's leading authority on computing and disability

AbilityNet, the national computing and disability charity is the UK's leading authority on the subject and helps thousands of disabled children every year to access and harness the power of computer technology. AbilityNet's consultants work directly with SENCOs and Special Needs teachers and with parents and their children, as well as on a more strategic level with LEAs, Heads of IT, School Heads and Governors, to identify the most cost effective route to implementing assistive technology within an inclusive framework. With SENDA at the top of the agenda, ICT can be a crucial part of the 'reasonable adjustment' that schools can make to ensure that disabled pupils can participate fully in the national curriculum and benefit from the learning opportunities on offer.

There is a huge and sometimes confusing choice of adaptive equipment on the market and with already tightly squeezed budgets, it is essential that the right choice of equipment is made for the benefit of the child and the school. AbilityNet is uniquely placed to provide the expert and impartial help that you need in this complex and fast-moving field.

For immediate help on all aspects of computing for children with special needs, AbilityNet has a free advice and information line on 0800 269545. Our trained staff are on hand to offer support and a range of over 50 factsheets providing key information on everything from keyboard and mouse alternatives to funding sources. Alternatively you can download these factsheets and other useful information directly from AbilityNet's website: www.abilitynet.org.uk

For a more in-depth evaluation of your child or pupil's ICT needs, you may require an AbilityNet assessment. This is carried out by a skilled consultant alongside other relevant professionals and enables the child to try out the full range of adaptive solutions to determine which combination will offer the best access route. Our expert assessors carry out hundreds of assessments each year from their ten offices nationwide funded either by the CAP (for which AbilityNet is an approved assessment centre) or on behalf of the LEA.

Whilst there are many organisations who are able to provide the IT advice, assessment and training services to people within education, there are fewer services of this sort available for adults with learning difficulties. AbilityNet are ready and available to give advice and assessment services to adults and those working with them.

In addition, AbilityNet offers a range of courses for anyone responsible for policies and practical implementation of SEN, accessibility issues or ICT in school, disabled student assessment of IT provision, inclusion of pupils with SEN and community ITC provision within a school setting.

For a more in-depth look at adaptive technology, at the DDA and SENDA and access to all the AbilityNet fact and skill sheets, as well as a comprehensive database of further advice and funding sources, AbilityNet's CD-rom of key information: "Successful Computing for Disabled People" is available directly from the Charity for £40 inc VAT. Call the freephone helpline: 0800 269545 for more information about this or any other AbilityNet services.

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' Open All Hours ' : a 24 hour service response to complex support needs.

Introduction.

The programme of closure of long – stay hospitals in Scotland has presented a challenge to services in responding to the needs of people with a learning disability, particularly those with complex support requirements. This article attempts to provide a brief account of the development and delivery of complex needs supports services in Glasgow and the ongoing challenges these services are addressing. Just over twenty years ago there were around 7000 people with a learning disability living in long – stay hospitals in Scotland. A recent estimate is that there are currently around 700 individuals living in the seven remaining long – stay hospitals, with these due to close by the year 2005.

Glasgow Learning Disability Partnership was established in 2001, and brought together Health and Local Authority colleagues to deliver a radical change agenda involving the closure of Lennox Castle Hospital and other long – stay residential units as well as the development of a range of responsive community – based service supports.

As part of this agenda, services for people with a learning disability who have complex support needs are undergoing significant change.

What do we mean by Complex Needs ?

Given the historical issues around re-provision of community residential services and the 'repatriation' of people with a learning disability from long – stay hospitals, the focus on complex needs supports from a city-wide perspective was significantly directed on those individuals with behavioural and/or mental health difficulties. Janssen et al (2002) reported there to be a higher prevalence of challenging behaviour and a vulnerability to stress with people who have greater disabilities. There is now a greater recognition and understanding of the vulnerability of people with a learning disability in terms of a wider predisposition to both health and social care difficulties and inequalities, and this has stimulated a more sensitive focus towards these issues. Our services now consider complex support needs to be where an individual experiences one, or any combination of the following :

- Behavioural difficulties which challenge services.
- Mental Health difficulties.
- Autistic Spectrum difficulties.
- Homelessness.
- Difficulties accessing culturally sensitive supports (the reference to complex here representing the challenge to services.)
- Difficulties through involvement with, or the potential for involvement with the Criminal Justice System.
- Complex epilepsy.
- Difficulty with access to Primary / Secondary Care services.
- Complex physical healthcare difficulties.

Service Model.

The main components of complex needs services are :

Area Learning Disability Teams.

There are currently ten of these Teams across Glasgow. Teams are primarily made up by Social Work staff, nurses and occupational therapists ; with dedicated input from psychiatry, and allied health professionals. These Teams principally work within defined localities.

Complex Needs Supports Team.

This is a multi – disciplinary Team made up by nursing, psychology, speech and language therapy and occupational therapy. The Team operates on a city–wide basis to support colleagues and partners to provide complex needs supports within local services.

Residential Services.

These services are provided across Glasgow on five 'sites' There are currently sixteen Short–stay Assessment and Treatment beds across three 'sites' and twenty Longer–stay Assessment and Treatment beds across three 'sites'. There are seven x 4 bed residential 'units' and one x 8 bed 'unit'. It is planned to develop an eight bed residential service for social care crises.

'Robust' Services.

Bell and Espie, (2002) emphasised that ; ' Although many people with learning disabilities have successfully moved from large institutions into community care in the last decade or so, there remain problems in the placement of adults who seriously challenge services'.

The Robust services model was an approach Glasgow Learning Disability Partnership employed to support people with a learning disability who had behavioural difficulties which challenged available services. The model aims to provide a more 'intimate' supportive relationship between specialist services and a number of care providers by employing practice development strategies, sharing good practice and providing dedicated resource and specialist input from the appropriate professionals and agencies. A similar model of service is proposed for individuals who have complex physical healthcare needs.

Out of Hours Services.

These services were developed around eighteen months ago, when the previous Community Nursing 'On Call' service could not be maintained due to service reconfiguration and competing demands. The service remains a 'nursing' service in that it is presently provided by both registered and non–registered nursing staff, but it aims to deliver a systemic range of crises and planned supports to adults with a learning disability, particularly those who have complex support needs.

Service Delivery.

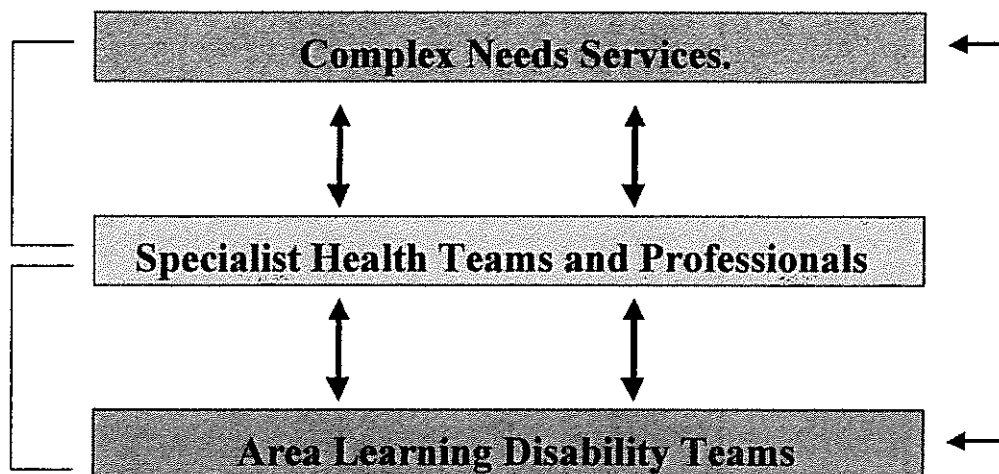


Figure 1.

Figure 1 attempts to illustrate the relationship and interface between services responding to people who have complex support needs.

Area Learning Disabilities Teams.

A.L.D.T.s represent the point of access to all services, and through a process of single shared assessment, will both identify and co-ordinate service supports to individuals who have complex care needs. Joint working has afforded a greater sensitivity and responsiveness to the social construction of complex needs and the A.L.D.T.s can develop the appropriate interface with both specialist services and other relevant partners e.g. Education, Housing and Care Providers, in order to realise the provision of the 'systemic' supports often required by individuals with intensive and complex needs. A.L.D.T.s can refer to other specialist health services and professionals for specific input at a local point of service delivery. Additionally, they can engage with Complex Needs Services providing city-wide services ; such as the Complex Needs Supports Team, Residential services and the Out of Hours service. A.L.D.T.s, as the 'constant' factor in care services, co-ordinate all services providing crises and/or proactive supports. Additionally, where required, some members of A.L.D.T.s can provide specialist supports and inputs on a city-wide basis e.g. sexual health and wellbeing.

Specialist Health Professionals and Teams

These interface with A.L.D.T.s to provide learning disability specific services in support of local services. Input may be from dedicated professions, such as speech and language therapy, dietetics, podiatry, psychology, physiotherapy and psychiatry and/or come from specialist Teams such as Epilepsy liason, Homelessness, Forensic liason, Primary/Secondary care liason and Eating, Nutrition and Dysphagia services. These services may also provide training and education to service users, parents and other carers with respect to supporting individuals with complex needs.

These specialist services also interface with other city-wide Complex Needs Services to provide additional support to local A.L.D.T.s and / or residential services.

Complex Needs Services

In Figure 1, Complex Needs Services refer to the Complex Needs Supports Team, Residential services and the Out of Hours service which are managed centrally under the same structure. These services operate in unison to mainly provide;

Specialised Assessment: of an individual's complex needs e.g behavioural, mental and/or physical health.

Planned Individual Support: input to person - centred service specifications. Placement re-design. Support reconfiguration. Provision of necessary supports to maintain functional placement. Outreach assessment to reduce the requirement for unnecessary admission to In-patient services.

Service Planning: input to the planning, commissioning and delivery of services for individuals with complex needs in transition from other services, such as long stay hospitals, children's services, secure care, individuals inappropriately admitted to acute psychiatry In-patient services and those in 'out of area' placements.

Service Supports: the co-ordination and/or delivery of services to support people to stay in their own homes/current residence. This may include environmental adjustment/redesign to support the delivery of complex healthcare supports. The provision of employment, recreational and short breaks services. Specialist training to both service users and carers to maintain placement, avoid unnecessary placement breakdown and support inclusion/access to 'mainstream' services.

Crises Supports: providing rapid and responsive deployment of resources to realise effective situational management and safe supports. Competence and confidence building with services users and carers. Analysing crises to inform proactive service development and responsive support provision.

Complex Needs services work closely together to achieve the most responsive service supports based on individual needs. Use of Residential services is planned to respond to priorities for admission, and to provide the supports necessary to avoid unnecessary admission or effectively support individuals in genuine need of admission. Additionally, there is an operational interface with other agencies such as Housing and Commissioning services to both minimise and manage delayed discharges by providing the supports necessary for individuals to return to community placements. The development of the Out of Hours service as a proactive support has forged a mutually responsive relationship with this service and the A.L.D.T.s. The latter can 'direct' the service inputs required to be delivered by the former in support of the more vulnerable or 'at risk' individuals with complex needs within a 24 hour continuum of care. In turn, Out of Hours personnel are now 'rotating' some of their hours of duty to enable them to 'follow through' their inputs with local A.L.D.T.s on a 9am – 5pm basis. Out of Hours services are interfaced well with other related services such as N.H.S. 24, mental health out of hours and social work standby services. Links are also established with Primary and Secondary care health services which affords a 24 hour 'sensitivity' to the support needs of people with a learning disability accessing these services on both a planned and emergency basis.

Service Challenges and Conclusion .

There has historically been an inverse relationship between complex support requirements and quality of life for those who experience, or are affected by these needs; particularly around social inclusion, access to services and restrictions on lifestyle opportunities. If services are to genuinely redress the balance, challenges lie in the development of responsive supports across both the needs and age continuum. Complex needs services in Glasgow are currently addressing a number of service priorities, including; service user involvement in service planning and delivery; supports in transition from child to adult services; the development of complex needs sensitive short breaks and day services (particularly for those with complex physical healthcare needs) and the continued investment in locally responsive and inclusive services. Providing a 24 hour service can only be effective if it is comprehensive in what it can deliver !

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report back



Conference on User - led Research

On 30th October 2003 the development of mental health services that are more responsive to the needs of service users took a major step forward with the Mental Health Foundation's conference launching its latest groundbreaking service user led research reports.

The conference was the culmination of a two year programme of work that supported 17 user led research projects ranging from examining the effectiveness of self-help groups for people who self harm to Rainbow Nation, a study of the experiences of Black African and African-Caribbean women. The conference confirmed the importance of user experience being put at the heart of service development and research into mental health.

Key speakers at the event included Jocelyn Cornwell, Acting Chief Executive of CHI (Commission for Health Improvement), Professor Clair Chilvers, Director of the Department of Health Research and Development Portfolio in Mental Health, and Diana Rose, Co-ordinator of the Service-User Research Enterprise, Institute of Psychiatry.

Speakers also included several service user researchers from the 17 user led research projects that have helped set the agenda for better and more responsive services. The report *Life Labour's Lost* revealed the need for a more flexible welfare system to help people with mental health problems get back to work. The Government's Social Exclusion Unit is using the findings to inform its work in this area.

Research into Self Help Groups for those who Self-Harm revealed that while self help is one of the most effective ways to cope with mental distress, funding is often dependent on outcomes set by the funders rather than the users of the self-help group.

Angie Smith, service user researcher into self help groups, said:

"While funders want self help groups to reduce the numbers of people harming themselves, self-help often works to build self esteem and help self-harmers cope. They work to different agendas which can make funding unreliable."

Dr Andrew McCulloch, Chief Executive of the Mental Health Foundation, said:

"The service user led research projects are an excellent example of how people with mental health problems can influence the policy and service development agenda. This is essential for the development of mental health services that meet the real needs of people with mental health problems in the most responsive and effective way possible."

"There is still a long way to go, but it is clear that the Department of Health is taking on board service users key messages to inform its future work. Service users have to be taken on as equal partners in research programmes. This is the only way that services fit for a modern mental health service will be developed properly."

Jocelyn Cornwell, Acting Chief Executive of the Commission for Health Improvement, said:

"The Mental Health Foundation's user led research projects help put service users at the heart of the debate on who decides research agendas, policy and service development. Bringing together service users that are helping mental health trusts become more effective with those that are not will help learning and in the long run bring more improved and more responsive mental health services for everyone."

For more information contact:
Will Little/Celia Richardson
Mental Health Foundation
Tel: 020 7802 0313 / 0312 or, out of hours, Tel: 07721 587643;
email Wittle@mhf.org.uk or Crichardson@mhf.org.uk

National Centre of Excellence for Early Intervention

Mencap envisages a national Early Intervention Centre of Excellence attached to a University Chair that provides a focus for research and course development for practitioners in early childhood interventions for disabled children. This one year position manages the project to examine the feasibility of this vision, and produces a report that clarifies current research, training, best practices, key challenges, opportunities, potential market, funding sources, likely partners/collaborators, implementation steps and costs.

Mencap is recruiting for two posts for this new project:

Project Manager Administrator

Both posts are full time and both are open to job-share. The range of skills needed by the Project Manager is such that we would particularly welcome job-share partners making a joint application. DfES funding has been secured until March 2005 and these posts will run from April 2004 to March 2005.

Closing date is Friday 30.1.04 so don't delay in contacting Lesley Campbell at Mencap on 020 7696 5504 for discussion and further information.

Letters...and...e-mails etc.

An e-mail passed on to PMLD-Link via the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities

I am the newly appointed self advocacy co-ordinator for Cheshire. This is a project funded by Cheshire Social Services and supported by Mencap with the remit to develop countywide self-advocacy groups.

Whilst historically self advocacy has been dominated by people with learning disabilities who use formal communication methods I don't see this as the future. My aim is to develop this project in a truly inclusive way, with the only barrier to inclusion being a person not wanting to be a self advocate.

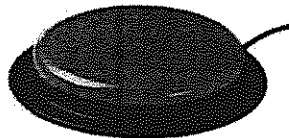
With this in mind I have explored previously the work of Acting Up and have looked at Circles of Support as ways of supporting self advocacy. Knowing that behaviour is communication I aim to develop networks of self advocates and supported self advocates using person centred approaches. I have no illusion that a handful of approaches to supporting self advocacy will work for everyone and this added challenge to my work serves to keep me on my toes thinking in ever more creative ways.

I have direct links to local partnership boards and am looking at issues of representation therein. I also wrote an MA thesis exploring the inclusion of people with the 'PMLD' label in planning monitoring and design of services (if anyone knows a publisher?).

I would love any feedback, especially success stories of supported self advocacy – I know it can be done.

Sarah.Burvill@mencap.org.uk

Do you love your BIGmack?



BIGmack may be one of the most popular output devices used by those with complex communication needs, yet we know so little about its applications!!

Jade Burgess & Nicola Grove at City University are researching this area for the first time

If you are currently using BIGmacks with children or young adults please fill in the questionnaire included with this issue or contact:

jade_burgess@hotmail.com for the questionnaire

All information will be made available for participants and results may be published

news... news...news

Pack helps learning disabilities staff understand family needs

On 27th October 2003 The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities launched the *Learning with Families Training Resource*. The pack aims to enable staff working in learning disability services to have a greater understanding of what it means for families to have a relative with a learning disability, and how this can affect their relationship with professionals.

The Government's White Paper, *Valuing People* proposed the involvement of family carers in staff training and development. Using family carers to design and deliver training in learning disability services can help staff to understand the experience of families.

Hazel Morgan, Head of the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities, said:
"Families are often the only constant relationship that the person with learning disabilities has in their life, so sensitive and open communication with families when services become involved are essential.

"For example, staff working with people with learning disabilities may not realise how hard it is for families to let go when it comes time for their relative with a learning disability to move out of the family home or plan for the future.

"Staff and families need to value each other's role in the lives of people with learning disabilities. This can only happen through positive communication.

"The Government's White Paper, Valuing People (Department of Health, 2001) has called for a new relationship between families and staff in learning disability services. The Living with Families Training Resource will play a major role in ensuring that this happens."

Four family carers were recruited as consultants on the design and delivery of the training resource. Areas that make up the pack include: life in the family home, planning for the future, working in partnership, a place to live, daily activities, short-term breaks and communication.

The pack also contains a video about four families. It ensures that different family perspectives are represented such as older family carers, minority ethnic groups, the needs of family members with both mild and severe learning disabilities. All the families describe the impact on their life of having a relative with a learning disability from birth to the present day.

The resource consists of a video presenting the experiences and views of four families to be used in conjunction with the written training materials. Groups will explore issues together through exercises and discussion points. There are eight sections that include handouts and overheads, an evaluation form is also included.

The resource has been funded by a Department of Health Section 64 grant.

Further information can be obtained from:
William Little/Celia Richardson,
The Foundation for People for Learning Disabilities,
Tel: 020 7802 0313/0312 or, out of hours, Tel: 07721 587643;
email wlittle@mhf.org.uk or crichardson@mhf.org.uk

National Training Award

In November 2003 Sunfield School, Stourbridge, West Midlands was awarded a National Training Award. This award acknowledges high quality training which has enabled staff development and organizational change. These awards are open to business, commerce and industry as well as education, and the national award is the highest level. The range of courses offered through the Sunfield Professional Development Centre have not only influenced the development of Sunfield staff, but also of many others in the region and nationally.

Sunfield School is a nationally respected independent residential special school for pupils with severe and complex learning needs, often including an autistic spectrum disorder. But just a few years ago, it was facing closure because it was failing academically and financially. Yet within five years Sunfield was meeting and exceeding required Ofsted standards.

A significant part of the difference was a new approach to teaching the children with autism, known as TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication-handicapped Children). It was developed by the University of North Carolina, and is a method of teaching which helps autistic children communicate more effectively and take part in learning activities that they would find otherwise too difficult to manage. An 'off the shelf' five-day course was modified to meet the school's needs as a residential school, and a new two-day course was developed for internal training of support staff. The course mix of lectures, discussions groups, seminars and 'hands on' practice sessions, is backed by work-based mentoring.

TEACCH training has been completed by more than 250 staff and the school now has a rolling programme of training, including additional courses in specific areas of working with pupils with autism, including communication and behavioural difficulties. The TEACCH training programme sits within a range of professional development opportunities for staff working at the school. Some Sunfield staff have used skills developed on TEACCH training to gain further qualifications through study and research projects in conjunction with University College Northampton and University College Worcester.

ICT and pupils with PMLD

A Unit from the QCA ICT schemes of work has provided the basis for the following unit of work called 'The Information around Us'. A class of key stage 1 pupils are carrying out activities in the form of short focused tasks. The pupils listen and respond to the sounds that carry information in every day life in school such as the school bell, music used in the sensory area and recordings of friends and staff voices. The pupils also use objects of reference, photographs, pictures or symbols to identify particular areas within the classroom or in the school. Over a period of time the pupils begin to associate sounds with a particular activity or a familiar person. They also begin to understand the sequence of activities in the school day by linking it with an object of reference, photograph or symbols.

At the end of this unit of work the class bring together the work they have experienced and learned into an integrated task. They develop and use individual and class timetables made from the objects of reference, symbols or pictures. They use these timetables to develop skills of anticipation, making choices and communication thus using the information around them.

reviews ... reviews ... reviews ... reviews

A Framework of Learning for Adults with Pprofound and Complex Learning Difficulties

Edited by Caroline Allen.

Published by David Fulton Publishers: 2002

This paper-backed book consisting of 144, A4 pages is about the development of a Framework for Learning devised by the staff and learners at Orchard College over the last eight years.

The framework provides a broad based curriculum which is eclectic in nature and grew out of materials and approaches which were developed to meet learners' needs rather than attempting to fit learners into a prescribed framework. It is strongly learner focused and is still being adapted today because it is sufficiently open to do so.

There are 12 chapters in all, - five of which are written by Caroline Allen. Other contributors are John Noble (Communication Development), Val Hobbs (Science and Technology), Andrew Lindup (Community Studies), Helen Mackay (Life Skills), Matthew Bellingham and Emma Sheppard (Basic Study Skills), Daniel Mold (Physical Education), Melinda Hutchinson (The collaborative framework). Caroline's chapters are largely devoted to the development of the framework although she also includes two chapters which address foundation skills and induction for learners who have hearing/visual impairments (this being the editor's area of specialism). However we are not told the background of the other authors.

The book is extremely easy to read being clearly laid, out and is in sufficient detail that any college wishing to use some of or all of the framework, would find it relatively easy to transfer to their own setting. The book clearly demonstrates a multi-professional approach, also with examples of close collaboration with the home.

It is particularly refreshing to read this work which addresses the college aged young

person as opposed to school child and it also adds to the small volume which is written in this area addressing complex needs in a realistic manner.

At the end of the book is an extremely useful index, and list of useful addresses - though it only includes one web page address, and the

reference list does not include any web based material, and most of the references are from the 1990,s.

The big question - would I recommend this book? Well that depends on your own professional background. As I said it is extremely easy to read and well laid out. I would think it should be a must for all trainee teachers and teachers who are looking to go into further education and work within special education. For those already working in this area it would be worth having a look at to see if you can glean some ideas from this book. It would also be extremely useful if you have had limited contact with people who have complex needs and now find yourself challenged.

Beyond the education field it has limited application, though there are some excellent ideas in it which others working with people who have complex needs may find useful i.e. residential staff and interfacing professionals.

At £19.50 it is a middle of the range book price, which would be a welcome addition and resource to a dedicated library.

Di Foxwell

Community Nurse and
Distance Education Tutor

The right place? A Parents' guide to choosing a residential special school

Written by Jenny Morris

Published by The Joseph Rowntree Foundation

When parents reach a decision to look at alternative educational provision ie (residential) for their child with special needs, (I can assure you it is a decision that no parent ever reaches lightly) the process is painful and it is a road often travelled because the child's needs are not being fully met within the current arrangements for their education, or there is inadequate support for the family in caring for their child outside school hours.

The sad truth has been that until this wonderful little booklet was published that it has been very difficult for parents to find out about residential schools. The response all too often from the statutory agencies is unhelpful and parents are made to feel they are asking for something which

is not on the menu. If we want a society where parents are enabled to make informed choices about their children's education then they are entitled to have access to information and receive guidance and support to help them through the process of looking at residential provision.

The book is very readable and the humorous illustrations are great. It is written for parents, with contributions from parents who have experience of choosing residential school and with hindsight know the questions which need to be asked. I think it takes good account of parents' vulnerability during this process and enables parents to feel confident in asking the questions which matter so much.

So often parents can feel as if there is no choice and they have to accept what is out there because they have reached a point where they feel that are no longer able to cope. This book deals sensitively with all the questions which need to be asked and empowers parents to ask them. It should be easily available to all parents. Residential schools themselves would also find it a useful point of reference for when they are reviewing their policies and procedures.

By using the book as a framework for choosing a residential school parents will feel confident that they are addressing all the issues, which are involved in this very complex process and be reaffirmed as the real experts regarding their child's needs.

Julia Dixon
Parent and Early Years Advisor

My Right to Play: A Child with Complex Needs
Written by Robert Orr
Published by Open University Press

This is a slim, accessible and powerful read with a refreshing message the voice of a person with multiple disabilities and a visual impairment. It is fictional but based on the experiences of the author with many children over time and with one close friend in particular. The title of this book is not an accurate description of the contents - it is not just about play but follows one person's development from childhood to adulthood and is concerned with all aspects of life. It is divided into 22 brief 'episodes' each related to a sense, including a sense of belonging, a sense of time, a sense of body. These offer fascinating insights and glimpses into the possible thoughts and perspectives of a child with complex needs. For example:

'There was one period when I was put on my platform with the box over me from which dangled the usual selection of hardware of me to clonk. I had a helper who would sit and watch and say things like 'Clever boy, you've found the soap dish' and 'Good reaching to the left'. She could keep this up for ages. There was one occasion when she nodded off after I had managed to play dead for a few minutes. I was then able to hear what the others were up to. I heard her discuss with my teacher later that I was bored with the Little Room now and perhaps she could do something different with me instead. I grabbed an assortment of dangling bits and rattled my cage with a frenzy. (p61-62)

The first person 'diary' is accompanied by associated text boxes, which provide references and other contextual evidence, and with key points 'in a nutshell' helpfully presented at the end of each episode. One example is: *Signs can be adapted so they are closer to the body and involve more touch.*

Although Robert Orr does acknowledge the difficulty of writing about disability if you are not yourself disabled, I remain slightly uncomfortable about this approach. Nevertheless I strongly recommend this as a thoughtful, poignant and often humorous read for all people working with or caring for children, young people and adults with complex needs.

Hazel Lawson
Principal Lecturer
University of Plymouth

A further review on

My Right To Play

This book is a welcome addition to the growing library of publications concerning the developmental and learning needs of children with complex special needs and multiple disability. It is a short book, approximately 100 pages and is unique to my knowledge in that it is written as if from the perspective of a child with no sight, no speech, and who is not independently mobile.

The author, Robert Orr, has a wealth of experience in working with children with profound and multiple learning difficulties, which is in evidence throughout the book.

My Right to Play is divided into 22 chapters which are referred to as 'episodes'. The first 'episode' is concerned with the importance of a secure base for children with complex needs. Thereafter the episodes refer to different aspects

of understanding which a child needs to develop and which may not develop spontaneously due to disability of some type. Each episode is entitled "A Sense of" and aspects of development and understanding which are covered include a sense of time and place, a sense of others, a sense of order, a sense of space, a sense of belonging, a sense of occasion, a sense of control, through a sense of smell, hearing, movement, seeing, location, body and finally ageing.

Each episode is ordered in a similar way, increasing the readability of the publication. The main text is written in the first person, but within each episode there are text boxes giving descriptions of key concepts to ensure that the reader is familiar with the concepts. In addition to this, each chapter is ended with a final text box entitled "In a nutshell". These final text boxes contain a summary of the points made within the episode presented as a series of statements/definitions and, in some cases, suggestions for further exploration of the points made within the text. The range of subjects addressed in each of the 22 episodes is a valid and useful way of drawing our attention to the complexity of development and the breadth of concepts which a child needs to assimilate and integrate in order to make sense of his or her world. The inter-relatedness of each of the issues addressed by each episode is unavoidable.

I have to say that my heart sank when I realized that this book was written in the first person, from the viewpoint of a child with complex and multiple needs, but it has an energy which makes it easy to read and provided it is recognized that the child 'talking' cannot address the needs of all children with complex needs, this book is thought provoking and refreshing, providing insight into the importance of play in the development of children who are so often denied the opportunity to play in any real sense of the word.

I can recommend this book to a wide audience and feel it has a place in the libraries of schools, hospitals, care homes, departments of social work and families whose children have profound and multiple learning difficulties.

Suzie Mitchell
Chartered Psychologist

PARTNERS WITH disABILITY.

Edited by Jan Hawkins, Carol Schaffer and Marjolein de Vries

Published by Kith & Kids 1996

This is a training manual for working in partnership with people who have a learning and or physical disability.

The manual is primarily written for volunteers though the editors believe it may be useful for anyone involved with someone who has physical and sensory disabilities.

However it also goes on to describe how Kith and Kids operates as a support group for families who have a member or members with disabilities.

Over the 30 years that Kith and Kids has existed it has grown to encompass many projects a high level of expertise. These are described in the book and range from volunteer training, social training, holiday activities and summer camps, friendship schemes and an advocacy project. Each year there are between 350-400 volunteers involved – that must certainly take some organising.

The book is divided into three parts: firstly, introduction and description of the volunteering opportunities with the organisation; the second part covers the training materials and the third part covers good practice. In all the booklet which is A4 soft backed has 86 pages.

One of the most interesting aspects of the book for me was that it demonstrated how well organised some support groups can be – particularly if supported to be so and the London Borough has in the past supplied grants to this organisation.

Reading this book, although it is not a new publication and pre *Valuing People*, it struck me how enlightened and pro active they were. This book has not dated and could be a leading light to many others.

Because it is not published by a major publisher it lacks publicity to widen its potential market. With this in mind I thoroughly recommend this book to all volunteer groups and public libraries. It can be purchased for a minimal charge from:- Kith and Kids c/o Haringey Irish Centre, Preoria Road, London N17 8DX

Di Foxwell
Community Nurse

Inclusive Science and Special Educational Needs CD ROM

Produced by ASE and NASEN

This collaborative Project between ASE (Association for Science Education) and NASEN (National Association for Special Educational Needs) was produced with support from the DfES SEN Small Programme Fund with the Science Enhancement Programme (SEP) supporting its reproduction and distribution.

The Inclusive Science and Special Educational Needs Resource contains a wealth of information and resources that will encourage pupils to get involved in practical science. Whilst most of the resources can be used directly with pupils with SEN they can also be adapted or provide ideas for pupils at the earliest stages of development. The resources may provide opportunities for pupils of different abilities to work together and share some experiences. The ideas that the CD ROM unlocks are wonderful and their uses depend upon your imagination. A number of materials may be enhanced through the use of multi-media projectors and interactive whiteboards.

In the first section, 'Investigations and Projects' the following projects are provided: Coastline Protection, Microscale Chemistry, Fast Plants, Science Passports, Perfume and Smelling, Citizenship and Farming and Let's Investigate. All the projects contain an outline of the project, resource sheets or model templates, teacher notes and links to additional materials or websites.

Focus Activities provide a range of activities and interactive materials for use in the Science lessons. They contain starter, main and plenary

activities which can be used, altered or further developed for all pupils with SEN. The focus activities contain the following materials; Concept Cartoons, Muscles and Movement, Dinosaur Hunt, Torches and Colour, Mr. Zippy's Trainers, Hot Potato Applications, SEP (Science Enhancement Programme) Materials, and supportive worksheets. The resources in this section are particularly interactive and have excellent links to other school or resource websites.

Words, symbols and pictures provide a range of resources to develop a greater understanding of the language of Science. You can visit a rainforest with symbol supported text.

In 'Further sources and ideas' the reader is pointed towards good teaching ideas from schools, contacts, and internet sites.

In the section 'SEN in the Science Department' the Cambridgeshire SEN Science Project has brought together a group of special schools and developed a scheme of work and an assessment/recording framework for science. The materials

Steve Cullingford-Agnew
Senior Lecturer
University College Northampton

The Inclusive Science and Special Education Needs CD ROM can be purchased for £5. To order contact adrianfenton@ase.org.uk or ASE Booksales Tel: 01707 28300

BOOKS AND RESOURCES

A Framework of Learning for Adults with Profound and Complex Learning Difficulties

edited by Caroline Allen. Published by David Fulton Publishers 2002

This book is reviewed in this issue of PMLD-Link

The Right Place? A Parents' guide to choosing a residential special school by Jenny Morris. Published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation

This book is reviewed in this issue.

My Right to Play: A Child with Complex Needs by Robert Orr. Published by Open University Press. Two reviews of this book are in this issue.

Partners with disability edited by Jan Hawkins, Carol Schaffer and Marjolein de Vries. Published by Kith & Kids 1996 This book is reviewed in this issue.

Implementing Intensive Interaction in Schools written by Mary Kellett and Melanie Nind. Published by David Fulton Publishers 2003

ISBN 1-84312-01904

Creating a Responsive Environment for People with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (2nd Edn) written by Jean Ware. Published by David Fulton Publishers 2003

ISBN 1-85346-734-0

Making Play Spaces More Accessible to All

A good practice guide produced by the office of the Deputy Prime Minister. (ODPM)

Available free by telephone on 0870 122 236 or on internet via www.odpm.gov.uk

Aids, Equipment and Adaptations

A factsheet on how to obtain equipment and where to go for further advice produced by Contact a Family. Telephone: 0121 455 0655

Assessing Functional Vision – children with complex needs produced by RNIB in print (quote ED406) or disk (ED407). Available from RNIB Customer Services – Tel. 0845 702 3153

An Integrated Pathway for Assessment and Support – For children with complex needs and their families written by Peter Limbrick. Published by Interconnections 2003

ISBN 0-9540976-1-0

Direct Payments Guidance – Community Care, Services for Carers, and Children's Services. New guidance from the Department of Health on providing Direct Payments.

Can be downloaded from <http://www.doh.gov.uk/directpayments/dpguidance.pdf>

Too Disabled for Care? Report on break services for Children with complex healthcare needs and their families by Shared Care Network. Can be found on

[http://sharedcarenetwork.org.uk/cgi-](http://sharedcarenetwork.org.uk/cgi-bin/scn/echo/fetch.pl?action+p_retrieve&element+too%20disabled&key+29&id+1)

[bin/scn/echo/fetch.pl?action+p_retrieve&element+too%20disabled&key+29&id+1](http://sharedcarenetwork.org.uk/cgi-bin/scn/echo/fetch.pl?action+p_retrieve&element+too%20disabled&key+29&id+1)

A Fair Day's Pay - an essential guide to benefits, payments and service user

involvement gives advice and guidance on: starting service user involvement for NHS Trusts, local authorities and voluntary organisations, advice to service users who are considering becoming involved in improving services; permitted work rules; additional information for employers; Who's Who in dealing with benefits, and sources of additional information.

A Fair Day's Pay costs £8, and is free to people who are unwaged.

To order it, call 020 7802 0304 or visit www.mentalhealth.org.uk

JOURNALS

Eye Contact – RNIB Education and Employment, 105 Judd Street, London WC1H 9NE.
Tel: 020 7388 1266

Current Awareness Service - up to date materials and information about everything new in learning disabilities.

CAS Subscriptions, BILD, Campion House, Green Street, Kidderminster, Worcs DY10 1JL

Living Well – Pavilion Publishing. Promoting inclusive lifestyles with people who have learning difficulties.

New Opportunity – the newsletter of the Handsel Trust. Tel: 0121 373 2747

BILD Advocacy Newsletter – information about advocacy produced by the Advocacy team. Tel: 01562 723027 or e-mail j.badger@bild.org.uk

BILD Learning Disability Bulletin quarterly reprints of recent key journal articles on a topic of particular interest, with guest editorial from an expert in the field.

Subscription details from BILD on 01562 723010 or e-mail at: m.davies@bild.org.uk

In Contact – the Newsletter of Contact a Family West Midlands. Tel: 0121 455 0655

Foundation Stones – Newsletter of the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities. Tel: 020 7802 0300 e-mail fpld@fpld.org.uk

SLD Experience – Published by BILD for professionals, parents and those working to support children and young people with severe and profound learning difficulties.

Tel: 01562 723010

Focus - a twice yearly newsletter, produced by RNIB Multiple Disability Service, for staff working with adults who have visual and learning disabilities. It is targeted at 'hands on' workers. 020 8 348 3533

Update - The Newsletter of Action for Leisure

Learning Disability Research Initiative Newsletter

Describes research funded by the Department of Health to support the implementation of 'Valuing People'. First issue in October 2003

Contact: Gordon Grant and Paul Ramcharan Tel: 0114 226 6840

RESOURCES

Smart Plasma Matisse – plasma screen with an interactive overlay

The board looks expensive, but you don't need the projector as it can be connected up to a laptop

<http://www.smartboard.co.uk/product/plasma/index.asp>

<http://www.projectorbox.co.uk/Smartboardmatisse.htm>

Software for recording achievement, target setting, assessment and reporting developed by teachers in Plymouth. Interactive, easy to use format covering P scales, National Curriculum to level 5, Foundation stage profile and stepping stones. Look at Plymouth BARE Project link on the Plymouth Grid for Learning site www.pgfl.plymouth.gov.uk

Inclusive Science and Special Educational Needs CD ROM produced by ASE and NASEN. This resource is reviewed in this issue.

COURSES AND CONFERENCES

FEBRUARY

9th 'Valuing People with Learning Disabilities' 3 years on: Progress and Challenges
Conference for all involved with services for people with learning difficulties in the northwest.

Organised by: Univerisiy of Manchester
Keynote speaker: John O'Brien
Further details: Lesley Oake
Tel: 0161 275 3337
e-mail: jtioffice@man.ac.uk

18TH Developing Life Stories and Person Centred Planning for People with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties

Organised by: BILD
Venue: Birmingham
Further details: Mark Gray
Tel: 01509 631 230

End Early Years and Rare Disorders

A workshop for professionals to increase awareness of rare disorders and disability in general.

Organised by: Contact a Family
Venue: Birmingham
Further details: Kirsty
0121 455 0655

MARCH

3rd Play Experiences Through Movement, Touch and Sound

Organised by: RNIB
Venue: Bristol
Further details: RNIB
Tel: 0207 388 1266

10th Positive Approaches to Advocacy

Day course for people who want to know more about advocacy.

Organised by: BILD
Trainer: Janet Badger
Venue: Kidderminster
Further details: BILD learning services
Tel: 01562 723025
e-mail: learning@bild.org.uk

11th Sex Education for People with Complex Needs

Organised by: RNIB
Speaker: Flo Longhorn
Venue: Cardiff
Tel: 029 2045 0440

11th 14-19 The Changing Agenda – Implications for Students with Special Needs

Conference on current developments in 14-19 education in the light of the Green Paper. The Conference will consider the opportunities and obstacles in implementing the Green Paper for Students with Special Educational Needs.

Organised by: Sunfield PDC
Keynote speaker: Kim Thorneywork
Dr. Lesley Dee
Further details: Sunfield PDC
Tel: 01562 883183
e-mail: Sunfield@sunfield.worcs.sch.uk

- 17th Developing Life Stories and Person Centred Planning for People with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties
 Organised by: BILD
 Venue: Brighton
 Further details: Mark Gray
 Tel: 01509 631 230
- 23rd
 and
 24th Exploring Sexuality Issues for People with Profound Learning Disabilities
 To develop staff confidence and identify ways to support individuals in a sensitive way.
 Organised by: Consent
 Led by: Christina Paparestis
 Further details: Consent
 Tel: 01923 670796
- 24th Positive Approaches to Advocacy
 Day course for people who want to know more about advocacy.
 Organised by: BILD
 Trainer: Janet Badger
 Venue: Halifax
 Further details: BILD learning services
 Tel: 01562 723025
 e-mail: learning@bild.org.uk
- 25th Communication for children with multiple disabilities and visual impairments
 Organised by: RNIB
 Venue: Wigan
 Further details: RNIB North West
 Tel: 0151 298 3222
- 31st Approaches to Communication & Literacy
 Organised by: Sunfield Professional Development Centre
 Led by: Rachel Key
 Ann Miles
 Venue: Sunfield PDC
 Further details: Sunfield PDC
 Tel: 01562 883183
 e-mail: Sunfield@sunfield.worcs.sch.uk

APRIL

- 7th Making Advocacy Accessible
 One day course to help people to understand communication and to use different methods of communication. It also looks at ways in which advocates can work with those who don't use words to communicate.
 Organised by: BILD
 Trainers: Lesley Johnson and Janet Badger
 Venue: Kidderminster
 Further details: BILD learning service
 Tel: 01562 723025
 e-mail: learning@bild.org.uk
- 21st Making Advocacy Accessible
 One day course to help people to understand communication and to use different methods of communication. It also looks at ways in which advocates can work with those who don't use words to communicate.
 Organised by: BILD
 Trainers: Lesley Johnson and Janet Badger
 Venue: Halifax
 Further details: BILD learning service
 Tel: 01562 723025
 e-mail: learning@bild.org.uk

MAY
5TH

Advocacy Dilemmas

day course to give participants some understanding of the current law around Consent and Capacity to make decisions. It also looks at parts of the Human Rights Act and how this information can help with some of the choices that advocates face.

Organised by: BILD
Trainers: Janet Badger and Ian Darch
Venue: Kidderminster
Further details: BILD learning services
Tel: 01562 723025
e-mail: learning@bild.org.uk

7th

Sherborne Developmental Movement Level II

Organised by: Sunfield PDC
Further details: Sunfield PDC
Tel: 01562 883183
e-mail: Sunfield@sunfield.worcs.sch.uk

19th

Advocacy Dilemmas

One day course to give participants some understanding of the current law around Consent and Capacity to make decisions. It also looks at parts of the Human Rights Act and how this information can help with some of the choices that advocates face.

Organised by: BILD
Trainers: Janet Badger and Ian Darch
Venue: Halifax
Further details: BILD learning services
Tel: 01562 723025
e-mail: learning@bild.org.uk

20th

Intensive Interaction: Quality Communication

Course designed for teachers and support staff and will include two workshops: Intensive Interaction and Multisensory Story Telling

Organised by: University College Northampton
Leaders: Melanie Nind
Kathryn Crosby
Venue: University College – Park Campus
Further details: Centre for Professional Development in Education
Tel: 01604 735500
e-mail: cpde@northampton.ac.uk

JUNE
23rd

Working Within and Around the Limitations of Vision

Course for teachers, support staff, advisory staff and multi-agency professionals.

Organised by: University College Northampton
Speaker: Prof. Gordon Dutton
Venue: University College – Park Campus
Further details: Centre for Professional Development in Education
Tel: 01604 735500
e-mail: cpde@northampton.ac.uk

JULY
7th
to
10th

Transform 2004 – The New Assistive Technology Conference and Exhibition

World Conference to explore the latest developments in assistive technology.

Keynote speaker: Christopher Reeves
Venue: University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology
Further details: Alison Littlewood
Tel: 01457 819790
e-mail: alison.littlewood@atandi.org

Citizen Advocacy Information & Training

Training programme includes courses at venues in Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham & London
Course titles include:

Recruiting and retaining Volunteers: Managing training and development within your organisation: Fundraising: Parental rights and learning disability: Person centred planning and independent advocacy: Foundation programme for advocacy co-ordinators: Developing training skills

Copies of the programme can be obtained online at:

www.citizenadvocacy.org.uk/CAIT_course_programme_Jan_to-Mar04.pdf

AbilityNet Events

Successful Computing on a Low Budget for Disabled People

Successful Computing with Physical Disability

Successful Computing with a Sensory Impairment

IT Disability and Leisure Course

For further information or to book a place contact AbilityNet on 0800 269545

LONGER COURSES (with accreditation)

Interdisciplinary work with People with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities

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

Offered at three levels: Post experience certificate (level 1), Advanced Certificate (level 3), Post graduate diploma and Masters (level M)

University of Birmingham School of Education

Further details: Tel: 0121 414 4866

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 interdisciplinary learning in a collaborative setting.

Further details: Helen Bradley, course director

Tel: 0121 415 8118

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.

University of Manchester Faculty of Education

Further details: The Programme Secretary, Educational Support & Inclusion

JTI Office, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL

Tel. 0161 275 3337

e-mail: JTI_Office@man.ac.uk

website: www.education.man.ac.uk/pmdl/

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. Each student is supported by a tutor throughout the course.

Further details: BILD Learning Services

Tel. 01562 723010

Certificate in Working with People who have Learning Disabilities: your pathway to achievement

The Learning Disabilities Award Framework route to qualification for staff supporting people with learning disabilities. A course programme and supporting materials, including a trainer's toolkit and student workbook.

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Year
2004**

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for you to send in your subscription
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