

Intensive Interaction

THE
INTENSIVE INTERACTION
NEWSLETTERALL BACK COPIES NOW AVAILABLE AT WWW.INTENSIVEINTERACTION.CO.UK**NEWS IN BRIEF****CAST: Child and Adult Support Team**

On the CAST website there are some interesting Intensive Interaction articles and training resources available at: www.cast-uk.com/intensive_interaction.htm. Amongst the resources are downloadable documents, including a very informative article on 'Autistic Spectrum Disorders and Intensive Interaction' by Mike Connor. There are also notes on using Intensive Interaction with people with ASD by SLT Abigail Sweeney, which looks at communication difficulties and strategies which can help.

II in PMLD Link Summer 2009
(Vol. 21, No. 2, Issue 63)

In Issue 63 of PMLD Link there are a couple of interesting articles: one is from teacher Kieron Hubrick called 'Intensive Interaction: find yourself and be yourself' (see *Quote of the Month* for a snippet from an unabridged version, available by contacting kieronh@carlson.school.nz). There is also a very informative article by Penny Lacey on 'Developing the Thinking of Learners with PMLD'

Intensive Interaction Contacts in Kuwait or Canada

Does anyone have any Intensive Interaction contacts in either **Kuwait** or **Canada**? If so, please contact Phoebe Caldwell who would like to know of any links others have already made. Please contact Phoebe at phoebecaldwell@btopenworld.com

Multi-Sensory Room—can you help?

Green Meadows School in Guiseley (near Leeds) have some funding to create a multi-sensory room for young people with autism. They would like suggestions and advice as to how to design the room and choose the most appropriate equipment to support Intensive Interaction and sensory integration. To help please contact: Sue Williamson at williamson1619@yahoo.co.uk

UNICEF support Intensive Interaction implementation in Montenegro

A report by Cath Irvine

Last year UNICEF Montenegro and the Montenegrin government invited me to work with 14 children who lived in an institution alongside over 100 adults – all with disabilities of varying degrees. The children ranged in age from 5 – 17, some with diagnoses of autism or cerebral palsy, but others with no clear learning disabilities apart from those caused by deprivation. The usual staff to resident ratio was 1:60 so very little proactive work was done with either adults or children.

UNICEF works in conjunction with the government and other NGOs (non-governmental organisations) to achieve long-term changes in residential and educational provision, so the aim of the work was not only to help the children to reach their potential, but also prepare them to move to small group homes.

Montenegro is a small but stunningly beautiful country behind Italy and nestled between Bosnia, Albania, and Serbia. It gained independence from Serbia in 2006.

During my first visit, for a month, the children had no idea of how to play or interact with each other, and so we began our Intensive Interaction. Two educators from the institute were allocated to work with me and they quickly came to appreciate the power of addressing the very basics of communication, and within a week most of the children began to make some progress and the motivation of the staff immediately improved.

Every session was videoed and we spent equal amounts of time in interactions and reflections so the staff learned to recognise what was happening both in their use of Intensive Interaction and with the children's signals, preferences and progress. At the end of the month we presented the work to the government and others from the disability services.

UNICEF also felt it important to introduce the approach to parents, and so now having completed my 3rd visit the approach has been introduced to about half the parent groups in the country. The parents have greeted Intensive Interaction with enthusiasm. Rasema, the mother of Adnon (a young man with cerebral palsy) tells anyone



Rasema and her son, Adnon

who will listen that she has waited 21 years to communicate with her son. She is thrilled that now she has learned to 'talk' with him. She is typical of the parents of children with profound disabilities – at last there is something that is relevant and effective.

The two educators from the institute, Milica and Marija, and four staff from a service in the north of the country have now completed the Intensive Interaction *Endorsed Practitioner Course* and now a further eight have begun the course, so Intensive Interaction will be cascaded into services without the need for a visiting 'expert'. Milica and Marija have also been given funding to attend and present at next year's Intensive Interaction Conference and to undertake a study tour whilst in the UK.

Meanwhile I will have a few more visits over the next few years, but there is now a clear possibility that everyone who needs Intensive Interaction should have access to it within a relatively short space of time.

Cath Irvine

Quote of the Month

'...the journey with each student is to build a sense of useful and fun togetherness, an empathic togetherness, and then to expand the student's interactive and communicative spectrum beyond there using the principles of Intensive Interaction'

Kieron Hubrick (teacher) in 'Intensive Interaction: find yourself and be yourself'



Intensive Interaction Coordinator's Course

Accredited through the Manchester Metropolitan University

North West Group: July 2008 – September 2009

By Nick Guthrie (now a qualified Intensive Interaction Coordinator)

Nine complete strangers, one developer/author; drawn to each other sharing the same passion, the same belief and the same quest: to be guided and nurtured towards being ambassadors in the realm that is Intensive Interaction.

Over a period of sixteen months, and delivered in seven blocks of three days; the Intensive Interaction course for the North West began in earnest on the 22nd of July 2008.

The components of the course resulted in an Undergraduate Certificate in Professional Studies (accredited through the Manchester Metropolitan University), and covered the following issues:

Acquiring and Applying Theoretical Knowledge in Intensive Interaction

To understand the research that underpins parent – infant interaction

Understand the theoretical knowledge that supports the development of Intensive Interaction

Understand a range of associated subjects that relate to Intensive Interaction

Developing Skills and Expertise in Advanced Intensive Interaction Practice

Understand Intensive Interaction principles and techniques

Know how to apply the principles and techniques of Intensive Interaction

Know how to recognise and develop the progress of the learner

Know how to record and evaluate learner progress

Know how to self-evaluate

Teaching and Mentoring in Intensive Interaction

Know and apply the skills for mentoring individuals and small groups of staff

Know how to lead seminar and workshop sessions on Intensive Interaction

Understand and address institutional issues

During the intervening period, we continued our practical work as Intensive Interaction practitioners and incorporated the involvement of other staff: we kept a log book on our Intensive Interaction practice, we videoed our own Intensive Interaction project which was presented and constructively evaluated by fellow colleagues – this proved to be a key element in positively sustaining our development. We were also allocated selected reading materials on various related themes.

Our focus was to address the heart of Intensive Interaction – “The Fundamentals of Communication” the foundations of all learning. All related subjects discussed and delved throughout the entirety of the course connected and echoed “The Fundamentals of Communication.”

The course provided learning opportunities relating to parent/infant interaction, secondary motivational deficit, autism, normalisation, age-appropriateness, physical contact, challenging behaviours, psychological theories and many more. These were accomplished by working closely with my colleagues through discussion, problem solving, demonstration, reflection and evaluation.

The course for me was like entering a parallel universe; I was amidst a group of like-minded folk, whose aspirations were to have Intensive Interaction recognised as – just so! Personally, my quest as an Intensive Interaction Coordinator is to grasp the opportunities of free will, exercising the right of a person's conversational patterns in a meaningful and reflective manner and to disseminate and promote Intensive Interaction within my area work, the Trust and further afield.

“Valuing People Now,” has identified Intensive Interaction as “*an approach to facilitating two-way communication with children and adults with severe or profound learning disabilities and/or Autism, who are still at an early stage of communication development.*”

I have been fortunate in that my employers have attached great importance to Intensive Interaction and subsequently the Intensive Interaction Coordinator's Course, I thank them for that. Therefore, I can not advocate strongly enough that this course is an opportunity to follow the recommendations set out in “Valuing People Now” and those organisations, Trusts and other authorities supporting adults and children with learning disabilities take the initiative and endorse those members of staff who wish to become Intensive Interaction Coordinators.



A somewhat jubilant Nick Guthrie receives her accredited Intensive Interaction Co-ordinators certificate from Dave Hewett

Nick Guthrie



Using Intensive Interaction to add to the palette of interactive possibilities in teacher-pupil communication

by Dr Mark Barber

in *European Journal of Special Needs Education* (2008) Vol. 23 (4), p. 393-402

In October 2003 a scheme was launched to introduce Intensive Interaction to Bayside Special Developmental School in Melbourne, Australia. This was a first for Australian schools. Previously to the introduction of the approach, the curriculum had been based on the achievement of skills and Intensive Interaction was thought by some to clash with this ethos. This is a summary of the research.

Intensive Interaction

Practitioners of Intensive Interaction put the success of the approach down to the flexibility of the environment and the teacher, as opposed to the student (Barber 2002). The learner is seen as having the “potential for interaction” (Nind and Powell 2000).

Bayside Special Developmental School, Victoria, has 80 pupils with moderate to profound learning disabilities, with ages ranging from 2-18 years. Class sizes vary from four to eight pupils per two members of staff (one teacher and one support worker). After initial staff training, 11 pupils were selected as being suitable for the study. Selection criteria included the pupils’ apparent communication difficulties and high levels of social isolation, as well as ‘large amounts of time spent in ritualised, self-oriented behaviours’ (Barber 2003).

During the baseline period of twelve weeks, Dr Barber attended the school for four hours per week. Staff were asked to record the participants’ baseline behaviours to look for patterns, and to think about how they could use these patterns to interact or make their presence known. Baseline videos of at least five minutes length were made for each pupil showing them in group activities and ‘individual teaching sessions’ (Barber 2003).

The Intervention:

During the 30 week intervention period staff interacted with pupils using Intensive Interaction techniques, rather than ones which were task or outcome focused. These were often initiated by pupils themselves during “downtime” and informal periods. Staff observed the activities that appeared to lead to increased sociability and positive affect (Barber 2003). When the pupils did not appear to show interest, staff tried to “intrigue” (Forster & Taylor 2006) the pupils into becoming involved (Barber 2003).

Staff met and discussed the video footage to reflect on their successes during the process. This helped them consider how they might improve their responses to certain behaviour patterns shown by the students. After 30 weeks Intensive Interaction was being used more widely in the school in formal and informal settings. Videos were made of 6-15 minutes duration, which matched the settings for the baseline videos, and these were rated on a second-by-second basis, with staff looking for specific indicators of ‘dialogues’ or ‘games’ (Barber 2003).

The results for pupils “M”, “A” and “J” were presented in graph form, comparing data from the baseline period and the evaluation period which began 12 months after the baseline.

Indicators of involvement (adapted from Kellett and Nind 2003) the following “indicators of involvement” were noted and compared:

- “No interactive behaviour” – e.g. no apparent interest shown by pupil
- “look at face” – fixed gaze



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- “smile”
- “socially directive physical contact” – pupil uses touch to initiate physical “dialogue”
- “engaged” – pupil is absorbed in mutual activity

The data collected appeared to show an increase in the social activity and engagement of the pupils. This, taken together with comments from staff about the increased “trust” of the learners, would suggest that the Intensive Interaction had been useful.

From the data collected indicating “no interactive behaviours”, there was a definite decrease between the baseline and evaluation period. It was suggested that this reflected the difference between the pupil and the teacher interacting in the conventional sense i.e. a pupil responding to a set task or object of focus and the teacher confirming this response, and the more relaxed dialogue of Intensive Interaction, where the teacher responds to their pupil’s idiosyncratic, potentially communicative behaviour (Barber 2003).

With the other sets of data, there was seen to be an increase in the pupil initiating and engaging in social contact with their communicative partners. Things like physical proximity, touch, turn taking and interactive game playing increased much more after the intervention period. It was noted that student “J” regularly used touch as a communication tool and student “A” was prompted to use touch a lot more as a result of the support worker’s use of spinning saucers.

The data showed generally that the use of Intensive Interaction increased the pupils’ level of social engagement. They appeared to show more interest in their interactive partners, and this may be because both partners responded to a wider range of “conversational topics” (Barber 2003) than they would with a more traditional teacher led session.

It was noted that the students, who all have autistic spectrum disorder, appeared to want to engage the communicative partner from a social point of view, not a purely functional one. Also, positive affect increased and the pupils gazed more directly at their partners. The pupils also engaged for longer periods, although it was difficult to tell whether this is because they were more interested in their partner, or because their partner was communicating with them in a different way, more in keeping with the ethos of Intensive Interaction.

Conclusion:

The report recognises that, while the results are limited, it does appear to show the positive effects of adopting Intensive Interaction in schools as a means of increasing the sociability and expression of pupils with profound multiple learning disabilities and autistic spectrum disorder. It also acknowledges the effect that teachers can have when they employ Intensive Interaction techniques.

Teachers are not as limited when the session is not skills or outcome focused, and this makes the session more enjoyable for both teacher and pupil, neither of whom are bound by an “acceptable” method of communication: the session is led by the student at their own pace.

The study shows that a more satisfying interaction takes place when the teacher responds to the student’s individual behaviours.

This summary was kindly submitted by Helen Simpson (Student Learning Disability Nurse, Leeds University School of Health Care)



Choosing a Camcorder for Intensive Interaction

By Mark Booth (Oldham)

Accessed October 2009 at <http://www.intensiveinteraction.co.uk/articles/camcorder.php>

Different camcorder types:

Mini DV cameras use tapes. These produce high quality images that can be edited using computer software and transferred to DVD. The tapes last 60 minutes in best quality mode and are relatively inexpensive.

DVD camcorders using small disks can record up to 20 minutes high quality images that can be viewed directly on a DVD player after finalising. Editing footage from these discs is difficult and they are really just convenient to play your footage quickly.

DVD camcorders that take full size DVDs are again convenient to play back footage quickly but editing is difficult. Also, there are a range of different DVD's to buy and not all camcorders take all discs and not all DVD players play all disk types which are:- ● DVD +R (record once) ● DVD -R (record once) ● DVD +RW (re recordable) ● DVD -RW (re recordable) ● DVD RAM (re recordable)

Hard Disc Drive camcorders (HDD Camcorders) record directly to the camcorder and do not use tapes or DVD discs. The size of the hard disc built into the camcorder determines how long you can record for. When the drive is full, say after 7 hours of recording, the contents of the camcorder have to be downloaded on to a computer for editing or burning to a DVD disc.

Flash Drive recorders use small removable cards, the type you find in digital cameras. Saving this footage means transferring it to a computer or buying another card. The image quality on these cameras is not very good.

My recommendation: I would recommend Mini DV Tape camcorders as these provide good or excellent quality images (depending on the quality of the camcorder), are very reasonably priced and footage can be transferred to disc quite easily.

What to look for when buying a camcorder:

Connections: When buying a camcorder find out how it connects to other equipment. Most of the above will probably connect straight to your recording equipment using a 1 pin to 3 pin lead - (the 1 pin goes into your camcorder and the 3 pins, one yellow, one red and one white, go into your TV, VHS or DVD or Hard Disc recorder). Using this will enable you to copy your footage straight to VHS tape or DVD disc. If connecting to a PC you will probably need to install the software that came with the camcorder and then connect the camcorder to the PC using a USB2 lead or better still a Firewire lead (check your PC has a connector).

Features: A camera to be used for recording Intensive Interaction doesn't have to have lots of fancy features but the following points are worth considering:-

1. **Will scenes look dark when filming inside?** Look for a camera that records reasonably well in low light conditions.
2. **Will the video look shaky if I am holding the camera when filming?** Buy a camera with an image stabilising feature or use a tripod.
3. **Will the person I am filming look very dark and be hard to see if I am filming them with a window or light behind them?** Buy a camera with a BLC (Back Light Conditions) feature. This might be incorporated into an 'Easy Mode' on the camera.
4. **What will my film sound like?** The microphone built into the camcorder will pick up all the sounds in the area being filmed. If the filming takes place a distance from people using the zoom, conversation and certainly quiet and subtle sounds will be very unclear. Some camcorders can have an external microphone connected to them which might be worth considering.
5. **What will the picture quality of my video be like?** The quality will depend on a number of things.
 - I. The number of pixels the image has, the more the better. These are counted in mega pixels. 1 mega pixel equals 1 million pixels or dots that make up the image.
 - II. The number of CCDs the camcorder has. These CCDs capture light and the more a camcorder has the brighter and more vibrant the colours will be. Some have one; some have three - one for each primary colour.
 - III. The quality of the lens.
 - IV. The points noted above in 'Features'.

Which camcorder to go for? It is difficult to recommend a specific make or model as new models are constantly being produced and others stop being made. The best thing to do is:

1. Consider all the above suggestions
2. Have a look at the information videos at the following web address www.videojug.com/interview/choosing-a-camcorder There are a number of videos to watch; all short and informative (you just have to wait for the advert to run).
3. When you have decided what format of camera to buy, have a look for recommended models in PC and camera magazines or on the internet.
4. When you have found your ideal recommended camcorder that suits your needs and budget, have a good look around for the best price you can find on the internet and on the high street - haggle if you can.
5. Give a thought to after care service. What will happen if it breaks? If bought from a shop you can take it back there but if purchased on the internet it might mean posting it back or getting it to a dedicated service centre.
6. Having thoughtfully purchased your lovely camcorder - Enjoy!



Intensive Interaction Institute News



Intensive Interaction Regional Networks *Building a supportive 'community of practitioners'*

Why Have Regional Groups?

- To support practitioners
- To provide a sharing learning environment
- To provide a feedback forum from and to the II Institute
- To help disseminate II
- To support people wishing to know more (i.e. parents)
- The development of the groups will depend on the members and issues that arise from those people in the area using II.

Where will they be?

Initially, the groups will be from a relatively wide geographical area i.e. north, south-east. However, as the groups grow it is anticipated that more local groups will emerge

Who will organise them?

Some people attending the UK Intensive Interaction conference in June 2008 indicated that they would be happy to take some responsibility for organising the groups in terms of dates and venues. It is envisaged that the groups will be democratic with a sense of equality amongst participants rather than being managed in a bureaucratic way. Responsibility for organising the groups can be relatively fluid.

What will happen at the meetings?

- This is largely up to the group, but it may include:
- Sharing and discussing case studies/video footage
- Discussion of practice guidelines/successes/blocks
- Promoting II to other people/services who may benefit
- Helping to produce information for the II Institute to further disseminate the approach
- Participating in relevant studies/questionnaires when requested by others researching the use of II
- Discussion of related topics

How often will the groups meet?

- A minimum of three times a year:
- The latest meetings are indicated below:

Oldham Wednesday 4th Nov 2009 | 1:30pm - 4:30pm
Rock Street Resource Centre, Oldham OL1 3UJ
Contact: Donna Williams Tel: 0161 770 8500
Email: Donna.williams@oldham.gov.uk

Merseyside Thursday 5th Nov | 1:00pm - 3:00pm
Rowan Park School, Sterrix Lane, Litherland L21 ODA
Contact: Jane Backland Tel: 01704 387143
Email: jane.backland@alderhey.nhs.uk

Brighton Friday 13th November | 11.00 – 3.00
Chailey Heritage School, Haywards Heath Road, Chailey, East Sussex BN8 4EF.
Contact: Liz Platt Tel: 01825 724444 lizplat@googlegmail.com

Leeds 30th November 2009 Time: 4-6pm
Venue: The Vine, Blenheim Centre, Crowther Place, Leeds, LS6 2ST Contact: Alison Covey on 0113 2451580 or
Email: alison.covey@leeds.gov.uk

Scotland/Glasgow Wed, 2nd Dec | 10:00- 12:00pm
Location: T.B.C.
Contact: Nicola Wightman at nicola.wightman@sw.gov.uk
Or Lucie Sellar Email: Lucie.sellar@glasgow.gov.uk

Oxford Thursday 3rd December 2009 12-3pm
Location: Slade House, Oxford, OX3 7JH
Contact: Anna Goodall anna.goodall@ridgeway.nhs.uk
Tel: 07920 211614

Nottingham Tue, 15th Dec 2009 | 3:00pm - 5:00pm
Location: Training and Learning Centre, Duncan Macmillan House, Porchester Road, Mapperley, Nottingham NG6 3AA
Contact: Vicky Romilly Email: Vicky.romilly@nottshc.nhs.uk
or Sue Pearson Email: sue.pearson@nottshc.nhs.uk

Isle of Man T.B.C. Contact: Jan Gordon;
On 07624 – 456756 / 202378 or Email: Jan.Gordon@gov.im

Birmingham T.B.C.
Contact: Penny Lacey at p.j.lacey@bham.ac.uk

South London T.B.C.
Contact: Lucy Harrison 07962 944 944
Email: l.harrison@richmond.gov.uk

Sunderland T.B.C.
Contacts: Rachel Eaglen Rachel.Eaglen@stw.nhs.uk
or Anneli Smith Tel: 0191 565 5368.

South West T.B.C.
Contact: Steve Maris Tel: 07951239315 or
steve.maris@mencap.org.uk or Dawn Graham on 01935
470626 email DSGraham@somerset.gov.uk

Derby T.B.C. Contact: Julie Pehl at
Julie.Pehl@derbysmhservices.nhs.uk or Allison Woodhead at
allison.woodhead@DerbysMHServices.nhs.uk

p.s. The direct circulation (both email and paper) of the UK *Intensive Interaction* Newsletter continues to grow and is now well **over 1000!**

Contact us!

Do you want a copy of this Newsletter? Either paper or electronic? Or have you got any pieces of news or information that you think might be of interest to other people working in this area? If so, then just contact Graham Firth using the details below.

Graham Firth, Intensive *Interaction* Project Leader, Leeds Partnerships NHS Trust,
St Mary's Hospital, Green Hill Road, Leeds, LS12 3QE Phone: 0113 3055160 or graham.firth@leedspft.nhs.uk

p.s. all the back copies of this Newsletter are now available at: www.intensiveinteraction.co.uk

Any views or opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Psychology *Learning Disability Services* of Leeds Partnerships NHS Trust or the Intensive Interaction Institute