



# Intensive Interaction Newsletter



December 2003

Issue 3 (what another one!)

## News in Brief:

- There are some spare places on the 5 morning training course in *Intensive Interaction* being given by Marion Crabbe (Speech and Language Therapist) in The Boardroom at St Mary's Hospital in Leeds. There are 2 courses, one starting in late January, one in late April next year.

Anyone wishing to put their names forward should contact Marion on 0113 3055393 **ASAP**.

- In the NHS National Electronic Library for Health, Learning Disabilities section:

Point 2.2c. Of the Communication with Adults and Children states:

'Intensive interaction approaches are shown to be effective in promoting early communication skills in adults and children (Health gain notation - 2 "likely to be beneficial")'

So there!

- Oh P.S.  
**Have a very Merry Xmas, and an interactive New Year**

## Phoebe Caldwell: a voice of experience

Phoebe Caldwell has over 25 years of experience working with people with severe learning disabilities, and has been a research fellow for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation when she studied the most innovative ways of working with people who find both communication and positive social interaction difficult.

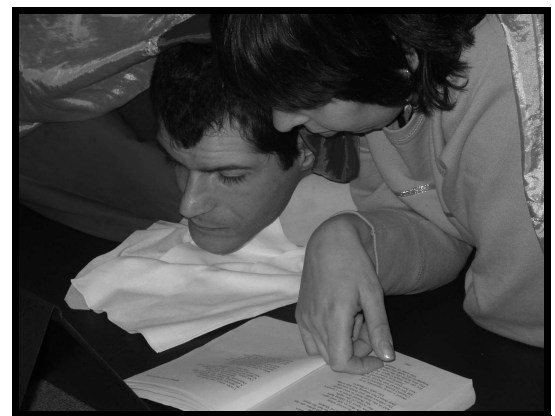
She has published several very useful books, *Getting in Touch*, *Person to Person*, and *You Don't Know What It's Like*, which cover communication with people with learning disabilities, challenging behaviour and autistic spectrum disorder. Her presentational and writing style is accessible and thought provoking, and her slightly different perspective on *Intensive Interaction* complements the work of Hewett and Nind.

Phoebe has also made a very useful video about using the techniques *Intensive Interaction* called '*Learning the Language*' (available from Pavilion Publishing (Brighton) ltd.) The video portrays an example of her success in get-

ting in touch with 'hard to reach' individuals, through her work with Gabriel. The video shows how, over a relatively short period of time, she works out the way in which he talks to himself, and how best she can respond to him in a meaningful way. The video also visits three young people who Phoebe had worked with in the past, and whose carers discuss how there was a real transformation in the lives of their clients, and how the techniques she demonstrated can be used by anyone.

I would recommend those interested to look into her work- it is time well spent!

**G. Firth**



Debbie and Harvey interact using rhythmical poetry reading at the Inclusive Learning Service

## Book Review: A Practical Guide to *Intensive Interaction*

A Practical Guide to *Intensive Interaction*, by Melanie Nind and Dave Hewett is, as the title would suggest, a practical guide to the use of *Intensive Interaction*.

This highly accessible handbook (it even has the odd cartoon in it! - Ed) contains simple yet effective advice on techniques for communicating with and relating to adults and children with severe learning difficul-

ties: It will undoubtedly be useful for all those involved in their care or education.

According to Prof. Roy McConkey (University of Ulster): "This book pinpoints many simple ways in which better communication can become a reality."

Why not buy it for yourself, or perhaps it could be the perfect Xmas present? HO, HO, HO!

## Did You Know?



Recently I have been reading some interesting research papers on the outcomes of *Intensive Interaction*, and one in particular, 'Sam's Story' by Mary Kellett, seemed both highly informative and well structured, and with its narrative form was also easily accessible to the reader.

With the study she shows how slow progress can be made visible for one of her pupils in a non-comparative or judgemental way, and although the paper carries a serious academic message, and delivers vitally important evidential backing for the use of *Intensive Interaction*, it does so in such an optimistic and engaging way that would be difficult not to be uplifted and personally moved by reading it.

Using a 'multiple-baseline interrupted time series methodology' (an objective before and after comparison) she shows just how much progress Sam made after the initiation of the daily 10 minute sessions of *Intensive Interaction*, these included:

- 'Huge steps' forward for Sam in 'Looking at or towards a partner's face'
- 'Modest progress' in the incidence of 'social physical contact'
- Sam's ability to 'attend to a joint focus or activity with the teacher... developed dramatically'
- 'Clearly evident' progression for Sam in the incidence of 'eye contact'
- Sam's vocalisations 'changed considerably' and he 'began to use his vocalising ability to respond contingently and to initiate contact'
- A highly significant increase in the time Sam spent 'engaged in social interaction'

'Sam's story: evaluating Intensive Interaction in terms of its effect on the social and communicative of a young child with severe learning difficulties' by Mary Kellett (2000) in *Support for Learning* Vol. 15, No 4, p165-171.



Rachel and Graham take turns in passing a balloon at the Inclusive Learning Service

*Quote of the week!*  
'Learning, (whatever else it may be) is an interactive process in which people learn from each other, and not just by showing and telling'  
Jerome Bruner (1996)

## The Intensive Interaction Research Project -An update

The research project in the Leeds Mental Health NHS Trust group homes continues to move on, with the initial interviews of the staff members, conducted by Helen Elford (Research Assistant), having now been completed, and the transcription process nearing its end. The next stage of primary analysis will start as soon as the QSR N6 software arrives and is installed, which should be any day now (Oh, what naïve optimism!-Ed).

The first 4 weeks of training have been completed at St Mary's Hospital in Leeds, the training having been carried out by Marion Crabbe (Speech and Language Therapist) and Graham Firth (*Intensive Interaction* Project Leader). The training has been very enjoyable so far (well, enjoyable to present at least -GF), with a final session planned for early January. It has hopefully been a worthwhile learning experience for the care staff so far – and some of the feedback about how some staff are already using the techniques of *Intensive Interaction* has been very pleasing to hear.

Graham Firth *Intensive Interaction* Project Leader

**Contact  
us!**

Have you got any pieces of news or information that you think might be of interest to other people working in this area? It might be your own story of using *Intensive Interaction*, perhaps a book review, or some information on a training event. Anything will be very gladly received.

If you have, then just send it in to the address below.

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