



# Intensive Interaction Newsletter

May/June 2004

Issue 6

## News in Brief:

There are a few spare places on the 5 morning training courses in *Intensive Interaction* being given by Marion Crabbe (Speech and Language Therapist) and Graham Firth (Intensive Interaction Project Leader) at St Mary's Hospital in Leeds. The new courses starts in October (12/10 to 16/11/04), on Tuesday mornings, 9.30-12.30; and in November (18/11 to 16/12/04) on Thursday mornings. Anyone wishing to put their names forward should contact Marion Crabbe on 0113 3055393 **ASAP**.

**P** Dr Penny Lacey (Senior Lecturer in Education at The School of Education, Birmingham University) is again presenting her excellent **BILD** training event on 'meeting the needs of people with profound learning disabilities', covering various topics and issues including *Intensive Interaction*. The event is to be repeated in a number of locations around the country between July and January 2005. So if you are interested please contact BILD: Tel: 01562 723025, or e-mail: learning@bild.org.uk

# Training! Training! Training!

There now seems to be an increasing number of opportunities available to receive training and information in the use of *Intensive Interaction*.

The newest training opportunities are being conducted by Phoebe Caldwell (a highly regarded practitioner and author in this area; previously featured in these very pages!) and Janet Gurney (a service manager and trainer, who has worked with Phoebe in the past) and both are being organised by CONCEPT TRAINING Ltd.

Phoebe's training days are currently on-going in a wide variety of locations around the country and continue until December (see the enclosed schedule and contact details)

Janet's training days commence in late June and continue until late November (again see the enclosed schedule and contact details).

Both courses are designed for a wide variety of professionals and staff in day services, education or social care. They both seem interesting and should prove valuable no matter what level of knowledge and experience practitioners currently have; a new perspective on our own professional practice is always valuable.

## IntensiveInteraction.co.uk

The dedicated Intensive Interaction website is back on-line again after a bit of a break.

The website has recommended reading lists of both the important books that have been published in the field, and of the research papers that have been published and support evidence-based practice in this area.

To view the site just log-on to the above web address; I think that's what you call it!

## Leeds Mental Health Trust Research Presentation

In a recently received evaluation on the Trust's *Intensive Interaction* presentation to South West Yorkshire's Modernising Mental Health & Learning Disabilities Research Workshop, we got the top ratings! Yes, that's right. Yes, us! Hurray! (now that's enough; stop the boasting- ed)



Paul and Graham interacting through physical contact, eye contact and vocal echoing at the *Inclusive Learning Service*

## Quote of the month!

'OhS\*\*T! Graham Firth (March 2004)  
after realising that the labelling system for last month's newsletter had gone haywire, so subject apologises to anyone who didn't receive their copy (back copies are available on request!)

## *Intensive Interaction - A Personal Account*

Name: **Melanie Nind**

Position: Academic, Lecturer, Researcher, Author,  
Trainer, Teacher, the lot!



Melanie Nind has worked on the development of *Intensive Interaction* since its inception at Harperbury Hospital School in the 1980s. She was one of the teachers there who questioned the existing practice and who sought to make the activities more meaningful for the students. Melanie's original research on

*Intensive Interaction* was concerned with its efficacy for developing the social and communication abilities of young people with severe and complex learning difficulties.

She has since worked with Mary Kellett to evaluate effectiveness of the approach with young children living at home, explored *Intensive Interaction* for individuals with autism and, in her role as an academic at The Open University, considered more of the theoretical and research aspects.

Her most recent interests include interactive approaches and emotional well-being and culturally sensitive *Intensive Interaction*. While currently lecturing and researching in the field of inclusive education, Melanie is still a passionate advocate of Intensive Interaction and continues to offer workshops and work in an advisory and training capacity for Oxfordshire Learning Disability NHS Trust.

As well as her publications with Dave Hewett, the following literature by Melanie may be of interest:

- Kellett, M. & Nind, M. (2003) *Implementing Intensive Interaction in Schools: Guidance for Practitioners, Managers and Coordinators*. London: David Fulton.
- Culham, A. & Nind, M. (2003) 'A Critical Analysis of Normalisation: Clearing the Way for Inclusion', *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability*, 28(1), pp. 65-78.

- Nind, M. & Skinner, J. (2003) 'Had much snow? Small talk among children and young people with severe learning difficulties', *The SLD Experience*, 37, pp. 16-20.
- Nind, M. & Kellett, M. (2002) 'Responding to individuals with severe learning difficulties and stereotyped behaviour: challenges for an inclusive era', *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 17(3), pp. 265-282.
- Nind, M. and Cochrane, S. (2002) 'Inclusive curricula? Pupils on the margins of special schools', *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 6(2) pp. 185-198.
- Collins, J., Harkin, J. & Nind, M. (2002) *Manifesto for Learning*. London: Continuum.
- Kellett, M. & Nind, M. (2001) 'Ethics in quasi-experimental research on people with severe learning disabilities: dilemmas and compromises', *British Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 29, pp. 51-55.
- Nind, M., Kellett, M. & Hopkins, V. (2001) 'Teachers' talk styles: communication with learners with severe learning difficulties', *Child Language, Teaching and Therapy*, 17(2), pp. 143-159.
- Nind, M. (2000) 'Intensive Interaction and children with autism', in Powell, S. (ed.) *Helping Children with Autism to Learn*. London: David Fulton. pp. 39-49.
- Nind, M. & Powell, S. (2000) 'Intensive Interaction and autism: some theoretical concerns', *Children & Society*, 14(2), pp. 98-109.
- Nind, M. (2000) 'Teachers' understanding of interactive approaches in special education', *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 47(2), pp. 183-199.
- Nind, M. (1999) 'Intensive Interaction and autism: a useful approach?', *British Journal of Special Education*, 26, 2, 96-102.
- Nind, M. (1996) 'Efficacy of Intensive Interaction: developing sociability and communication in people with severe learning difficulties using an approach based on caregiver-infant interaction', *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 11(1), pp. 48-66.



Nind, M. (1996) 'Efficacy of *Intensive Interaction*; Developing Sociability and Communication in people with severe and complex learning difficulties using an approach based on caregiver- infant interaction', in the *European Journal of Special Educational Needs*, Volume 11, No 1, pp 48-66

This piece of research (a multiple baseline interrupted time series design) was carried out with six students who were residents of a long stay hospital and part time students at the hospital school. The measurements of change were done using specially constructed observation schedules, Video Analysis, Kieran & Reid's *Pre-Verbal Communication Schedule* and an adaptation of Brazelton's *Cuddliness Scale*.

### The Results:

The findings from the observation schedule showed a greater frequency of initiation of social contact, or initiation of social contact as a new phenomenon for all six students. There was also an increase in responses to proximity or physical contact in all students, and these included 'looking at the teachers face' (3 students); 'making eye contact' (2 students); 'exhibiting smiles' (2 students), or 'happy vocalisations' (2 students). The video footage showed that there was an overall increase in the time spent in interactive behaviours for five out of the six students, with 'facially regarding the teacher' increasing for three students and was a new development for two more. 'Smiling in a response to a teacher' increased for all the students.

Each of the students developed some new interactive behaviour. Among these were 'looking at the teacher's face' and 'contingent smiling', as well as 'nestling into the teacher' and 'exploring the teacher's face with hands'; 'maintaining a state of joint focus'; 'contingent vocalisation', and 'taking the hand of the teacher'. There was an increase in the engagement in interactive sequences for four of the students and it emerged as a new development for another student.

The incidence of ritualistic behaviours or 'organises self-involvement' decreased for four of the students, and all the students made advances in their communication abilities measured on the *Pre-Verbal Communication Schedule*. Progress was particularly evident in the areas of communications of need and preferences; vocal imitation; communication through gesture, and through the use of sounds. The students all made advances in their abilities to reciprocate warm physical contact as measured by the *Cuddliness Scale*.

The teacher's recordings of these changes also noted that two students who had never been able to make eye contact had learnt to do so. Two students whose whole behavioural repertoire had been dominated by ritualistic self-involved behaviours, paused from this in order to engage in interactive games and one student was noted to change from being a student who no one could relate to, to being someone with whom all the staff team enjoyed interactive games. Another student who was extremely limited in their movement and who was mostly sleepy and unmotivated, became alert and responsive, vocalising and waving her arms with the excitement of an interactive game.

### The Conclusions Drawn:

The conclusions of the research were that after *Intensive Interaction* was introduced, the students made gains in terms of social and communication abilities, with new interactive behaviours emerging as ritualistic behaviours decreased. Analysis of the historical logs of the students showed that there were no significant events concurrent with the onset of the intervention and there were no strong rival explanations for the developments being caused by anything other than the use of *Intensive Interaction*.

### 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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