

Advancing practitioner Skills to sustain interaction and to 'stay in the grey'

– what does it look like?

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'there is more to being a member of the human community than the acquisition of minimal independence skills'

Ware J, [1994] Interdisciplinary work with people who have PMLD; University of Birmingham

- Communication involves use and understanding **not just use**
- Communication is not a performance to be taught.....
 - it's a process that is understood

Misconceptions around Intensive Interaction

- ◆ Intensive interaction is.....
 - aimed at reducing challenging behaviours
 - effortless
 - about copying what people do
 - about giving complete control to the learner
 - a one-to-one activity that must be carried out somewhere quiet and undisturbed
- ◆ You need to be outgoing / really self confident to do it
- ◆ Intensive interaction can be done in Communication Group
- ◆ Intensive interaction activities are unstructured
- ◆ You need a one-to one staffing ration otherwise you can't do it.

imitation

Initially, you may find that imitation is an effective way to

- ◆ 'intrigue' the learner
- ◆ announce your availability
- ◆ begin to explore 'common ground' or mutual responses

DANGER: Some practitioners limit their interactive responses to imitation, because

1. learner and practitioner are happy just '**being**' together
2. they're '*conscientiously avoiding taking the lead*'

Just 'being is fine

'conscientiously avoiding taking the lead'

Jenny smiles, so I smile back,
She claps her hands, so I clap,
She makes a noise, so I do too,
She's very happy and laughs a lot and we
have a good time, but..... **I feel like an expensive switch toy**

Avoid the extremes "off" or "on"

◆ **Stay in the grey**
don't get stuck at imitation

- Conversations **can be** opportunities to explore mutual adjustment
- Interactions **should** be opportunities for the learner to find about how to sustain a successful encounter
- learning occurs when we provide the environment that allows the learner to recognise that something is happening because of something s/he does
- Communication is not a science.....its an art
- Communication is not taught by training the performance of behaviours...
- Interactive behaviour is the visible manifestation of the learner's cognitive involvement in the **process** of communication
- Functions of communication are something we learn – they are not behaviours we're taught
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