COMMUNICATING WITH LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE PROFOUND INTELLECTUAL AND ASSOCIATED DISABILITIES USING INTENSIVE INTERACTION

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The AIMS of Intensive Interaction include…

To develop:-

Cognitive abilities including social cause and effect and predicting and exploring the behaviour of others

Fundamental communication abilities including eye contact, facial expression, turn taking and engagement

Sociability, including the desire and ability to be with others, taking part in and initiating social contact and understanding the ways in which social encounters can be enjoyable

[Nind & Hewett 1996; 1998; 2001]

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<th>What is Intensive Interaction?</th>
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<td>Some descriptions</td>
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<td>• A way of learning to communicate and build meaningful relationships with people who don’t use words or any other obvious forms of communication</td>
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<td>• An approach to teaching the pre-speech fundamentals of communication to children and adults who have severe learning difficulties and/or autism and who are still at an early stage of communication development (Hewett, 2006)</td>
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<td>• A practical approach to interacting with people with learning disabilities who do not find it easy communicating or being social</td>
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<td>• An approach to developing the ability and desire to communicate and participate in social interactions</td>
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<td>• Intensive Interaction is an approach that uses behaviour the learner will recognise as their own to develop a two way dialogue, through which the fundamental communication skills and enjoyment of social interaction can be learnt. Barber &amp; Bowen [2007]</td>
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<td>• the opportunity to practice the behaviours that sustain social encounters</td>
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<td>• ie; to explore the idea of ‘agency’ Barber 2006</td>
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<th>Who is Intensive Interaction for?</th>
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<td>The approach was developed, and is primarily used with people who experience severe/profound intellectual impairments, or who might be described as having a high dependency on the interpretation of others to make themselves understood.</td>
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EG learners who demonstrate a

• high dependency on the interpretation of others to make themselves understood;
• level of awareness of their own intentions which is low, or difficult to determine;
• level of comprehension which is low or difficult to determine;
• very limited or inconsistent ways of communicating which frequently lead to an ambiguity of meaning;
• tendency to acquiesce to the suggestions of others and an inability to contradict [another’s] interpretation.

Grove, N., Bunning, K., Porter, J. & Olsson, C., [1999]. See what I mean: interpreting the meaning of communication by people with severe and profound intellectual disabilities, Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disability, 12, 190-203

Who are typically very withdrawn or who spend large amounts of time in ritualised, self oriented behaviours Nind.M & Hewett, D [2001] Handbook of Intensive Interaction BILD Publishing
Who is Intensive Interaction for [continued]

Often People with PIMD & multi-sensory impairments
- People who don’t understand symbols, gestures or signs
- People who are [communicatively] pre-intentional
- People who don’t communicate for social purposes [Barber 2007]

People with profound intellectual impairments and Autistic Spectrum Disorders
People who are “difficult to reach” – seem to be somewhere else, in their own space, on the periphery of activities – even familiar ones
People who don’t show motivation to be with others

When the approach is used as a means of developing interaction skills in people who are typically very withdrawn or who spend large amounts of time in ritualised, self oriented behaviours, it appears to contribute to a general shift from an inner to an outer, more social world.

“People who have poorly developed social and communication abilities, usually accompanied by additional learning, sensory or behavioural difficulties”. Nind & Hewett 96

Intensive Interaction is not…. A behavioural intervention
ie you don’t use it to get rid of something [eg challenging behaviour]

PIMD: What’s the problem?
Memory [or ability to recall] is profoundly compromised
High incidence of visual impairment
High incidence of hearing impairment
Mobility problems [limited learning]
Sensory integration problems
Acquired/learned helplessness
Confused
Unable to understand what is being asked of them
Different perspective of events
Orienting to internal sensory focus

For someone with profound intellectual disabilities, the world looks very different from the way it does to you

‘Learners with Profound I.D. clearly differ from pre-intentional infants without disabilities…. They have had much longer than infants without LD to learn repeated patterns of unusual behaviours e.g. stereotypy or self-injury (Ephraim, 1997; Caldwell, 1996) as ways to reduce stress and shut out the unsafe external world ……. or to provide interest in an otherwise under-stimulating environment.’


we tend to
- Under estimate the extent of learner’s hearing loss
- Over estimate the levels of non-verbal support we give
- Under estimate how much language we use with learners
- Over-estimate learner’s comprehension skills
- Mismatch the complexity of their language and learner’s levels of comprehension
- Have difficulty identifying learners’ non-verbal signals/
- See positive changes in communication resulting from changes in learners rather than themselves [getting to know the learner better]


Bradshaw [2001] Complexity of Staff communication and reported levels of understanding skills in adults with ID Journal of Intellectual Disability Research 45,233-243 Communicative interactions between experienced staff and people with severe/profound intellectual disabilities
The Fundamentals of Communication
[D. Hewett 2008]

- enjoying being with another person
- developing the ability to attend to that person
- concentration and attention span
- learning to do sequences of activity with the other person
- taking turns in exchanges of behaviour
- sharing personal space
- using and understanding eye contacts
- using and understanding facial expressions
- using and understanding physical contacts
- using and understanding non-verbal communication
- using vocalisations with meaning
- layers of emotional understandings
- learning to regulate and control arousal levels
What does it accomplish?

Demonstrated gains in communication, sociability and in the ability both to initiate and maintain social contact.

‘Our experience and anecdotal evidence suggests that …[I.I.]… leads to improved emotional well-being expressed through reduced self-injury, more alert posture and apparent interest in the environment.

Intensive Interaction specific publications


Additional references of interest


For full list go to http://www.intensiveinteraction.co.uk/info/publications.php

Intensive Interaction is interactive play in which the learners’ exploration and rehearsal of the complex communication skills that enable us to engage another person, are carefully supported.

These skills would include eg face to face moments, turn taking, using and reading non-verbal cues, mutual adjustment etc.

The approach recognizes that play is one of the most important learning activities there is in the lives of our students. It is a deceptively complex activity as it is the arena in which we learn the routines of being a communicator

Hewett 2008 Intensive Interaction : DVD

Key features of interactive process in Intensive Interaction

- Rigorous observation to identify the learner’s interests
- The creation of naturalistic open ended interactive games, so that [from the learners perspective] educator and learner are together with the purpose of enjoying each other
- Following a set of principles, the skilled partner envelopes the contribution of the learner, enabling them to maintain successful involvement in the interaction
- The skilled partner synchronises their interpersonal behaviours in order to become engaging
- ‘Skilled partner’ follows the learner’s lead, handing over control of the activity when ever possible
- Using a palette of non-directive responses, the practitioner encourages the learner to experiment with potentially communicative acts so that the learner’ can explore how to maintain and sustain interaction

Through play based on the learner’s sounds and/or movements, it enables the learner to explore and experiment, so that over time s/he learns to recognise what it is s/he does, that makes us do the things s/he wants us to do

Bowen 2007

- Following: empowering……enabling joint attention…… responding....

- The quality of a learner’s attention is substantially greater when focussed on events of their own choosing, than to events chosen by someone else


The central principal of the approach is that you allow the person who is learning to more or less lead the activity, while you help to develop the content and flow of the activity, by responding to aspects of the person’s behaviour. The skilled partner is responsive rather than directive – this makes the content of the interaction

- recognizable to the learner,
- engaging to the learner,
- at an agreeable speed or tempo for the learner
“We’re already doing most of this”

What is different?
Conventionally, intervention begins by assessing the learner to identify what skills are problematic, or which areas of the learner’s performance require intervention. Using Intensive Interaction, observation is aimed at identifying strengths and preferences, so that these become the context for communicative encounters.

What is different?
Conventional styles of intervention and teaching are characterised by the teacher or therapist deciding on a predicted outcome or objective. Intensive Interaction is characterised as open ended – the outcome of each encounter is not predicted or aimed towards.

What is different?
Teacher therapist leads by providing the focus or interest, attracting learner’s attention into joint focus [usually an object]. Using Intensive Interaction the practitioner looks for and responds to the learner’s solitary activity or focus of interest by demonstratively joining in with it.

What is different?
Stereotyped, self involved, or ritually organised behaviours are conventionally ‘inappropriate’, frequently the focus of intervention. Using Intensive Interaction these are probable ‘doors’ or indications of interest.

What is different?
Teaching and therapy interventions frequently focus on teaching new skills or protocols. Using Intensive Interaction practitioners should attempt to engage the learner with ‘intrusions’ that are within their existing behavioural repertoire or known pleasure.

What is different?
Conventionally, activities are limited to those considered to be age appropriate. Using Intensive Interaction practitioners communicate with the learner using ‘intrusions’ that interest them.

Internet

BILD Fact sheet 009 Intensive Interaction [www.bild.org.uk]

INTENSIVE INTERACTION NEWSLETTER: graham.firth@leedsmh.nhs.uk

U.K. Intensive Interaction website [www.IntensiveInteraction.co.uk]
includes: resources, dialogues, training details, links

my website……… www.drmarkbarber.co.uk
includes articles, paperwork, details of Australian courses

If you want to receive the
Australian Intensive Interaction Newsletter,
Dave Hewett’s DVD Intensive Interaction,
OR
Mark Barber’s DVD Exploring the Envelope of Intensive Interaction,
contact drmarkbarber@hotmail.com