“the quality of the provision for educational assessment, training and research in the Centre is outstanding”. The joint Education and Training Inspectorate report April 2012

Middletown Centre for Autism

Best Practice for a Holistic Approach to Inclusion for Pupils with Autism
Centre for Autism
Middletown
The Challenge to Teachers

• Knowledge of Autism
• Knowledge of Autism Specific Strategies.
• Inclusion..
• Multi-agency working.
• The Curriculum.
• Class size.
• Other children with SEN.
• Managing the Classroom environment.
• Learning Styles.
Summer Course Development

• How to provide teachers with the experience of using autism specific strategies within the classroom?

Case Studies?
Working with children?
Structure of Course

- 25 participants
- 5 Groups
- 6 MCA Staff
- Parent Panel
- Resource development
Topics Covered

• An overview of visual teaching methods, communication methods, behavioural interventions and sensory-based interventions.
• An overview of assessment and planning for students with autism.
• Integration of teaching and intervention methods within education plans
• Working directly with children and young people with autism.
Points to remember

• These young people with autism are young people first.

• Learners with autism need a programme designed to meet their unique needs.
4 Principles

• Understanding autism and the individual child.
• Challenging Behaviours are not usually deliberate or manipulative.
• Respond to learning styles.
• Positive Attitude.
What is Holistic Approach?

• Depending on your preferences/training and knowledge of autism and the child concerned.

• Visual Teaching Model
• Sensory Processing
• Positive Behaviour Approaches.
• Cognitive Approaches.
Holistic Approach Training

The training addresses how to integrate autism specific strategies (visual teaching, sensory diets and behavioural and cognitive techniques) to promote positive behaviours and help children and young people with autism access the curriculum.
Starting Point

- Get to know the child
- Assessment
- Profile
- Across environments
Accessing the curriculum

• Physical structure can be manipulated to address a number of issues that challenge students with autism. Primary are:
  • Identifying boundaries and segmenting the space
  • Limiting distracting elements
Minimizing Distractors

• Preferential seating
• Screening distractions
• Organizing work and learning materials
• Giving instructions outside of the more stimulating environment.
• A quiet place to retreat to
Sensory Based Strategies

Holistic Approach for Pupils with autism
Sensory Processing

• Sensory processing involves:
  – Receiving sensory input
  – Registering sensory input
  – Integrating sensory input
  – Responding to sensory input

• Consider:
  – What sensory input are you currently receiving?
  – What sensory input does a pupil receive in the classroom?
Sensory Modulation

• Sensory modulation allows us to regulate the amount and intensity of sensory input processed by the brain

• ‘Modulation of sensory input is critical to our ability to engage in daily occupations. Filtering of sensations and attending to those that are relevant, maintaining an optimal level of arousal and maintaining attention to task all require modulation.’ (Bundy, Lane and Murray, 2002)
The Calm Alert State

• Sensory modulation allows us to achieve the **calm alert state**
• We attend to relevant and important sensory stimuli in the environment
• We ignore irrelevant and unimportant stimuli in the environment
• We are therefore alert, but calm
Sensory Processing and ASD

‘...certain sounds frightened me- dogs barking, mopeds, tractors and cars, engines of various kinds. They would explode inside me and make me lose all sense of the way my body related to my surroundings. It was like being flung out into space- whoosh- quite without warning. Sometimes I screamed and covered my ears....some sounds around me I hardly reacted to at all...’ (Gerland G, 1999)
Sensory issues and ASD

• Although sensory processing difficulties are not cited as a core diagnostic feature of ASD, these difficulties often underpin many of the core features e.g.
  – Stereotyped and repetitive behaviours
  – Lack of varied play
  – Lack of social interaction
  – Limited eye contact
‘Heavy work’ activities

• These are activities which provide heavy muscle work
• They are effective in achieving the calm alert state:
  – they will calm the child who is over-responding to sensory input
  – they will increase alertness in the child who is under-responding to sensory input
  – they will provide input to the sensory seeker and thus reduce hyperactivity and improve attention
Positive Behaviour Strategies

Holistic Approach for Pupils with autism
What is Reinforcement?

- Technical term for *learning*.
- It is the process by which new responses are acquired and existing ones are strengthened.
- It helps explain how behaviour occurs.
- Anything can be a reinforcer so long as it strengthens future behaviour.
Broadly speaking, there are three aims for all behaviour:

1. Obtain
2. Avoid
3. Sensory/biological
Behaviours Motivated by Obtaining

- The technical term for this is *positive reinforcement*.
- Increases the likelihood of behaviour occurring in the future.
- Usually the individual finds the reinforcement enjoyable.
Behaviours Motivated by Avoiding

- The technical term for this is *negative reinforcement* (not the same as punishment).
- Also means that behaviour is *more likely* to take place in the future.
- Behaviour is *increased* by stopping something that’s unpleasant.
Internally Motivated Behaviours

Reinforcement that takes place in the absence of all social interaction, i.e. sensory and biological reinforcement often strengthens stereotypic behaviours.
Evaluation

Obtaining

Avoiding

Internal Factors
• Blended intervention course video
Summer 2016
Self Evaluation Component
Summer Courses 2016

Child Based
Dublin West Education Centre
St. Mary’s NS Saggart
• 4-8 July 2016

Case Study Based
Monaghan Education Centre
• 4-8 July 2016

Sligo Education Centre
• 22-26 August 2016
Future training available on website Autumn 2016

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