



## **Intensive Interaction**

An interaction can be defined as one person communicating something to another who communicates something in return.

There are many opportunities in the curriculum for teachers to 'lead' such interactions with a view to pupils responding in particular ways (which are often expressed as 'learning outcomes' or 'learning objectives').

However, pupils should also have opportunities to influence, 'steer' or lead interactions themselves. The aims of the school curriculum emphasise the development of pupils' independence and autonomy and intensive interaction is an approach which specifically supports the communication and personal and social development curriculum.

Intensive interaction was developed by Nind and Hewitt (1988, 1989) and makes use of a range of interactive games which have been shown to occur in interactions between infants and their primary caregivers. The authors describe the approach in the following way:

"The intention is that the teacher and the learner become jointly focused on each other, that they share some mutuality, and that they want to repeat this enjoyable experience. There is generally no particular task to be achieved and the focus is the quality of the activity of the two participants, often with the teacher building a game from an action, facial expression or sound made by the student."

At its simplest, Intensive interaction is an approach which can be incorporated into all activities simply by responding sensitively to what pupils do. It is very closely linked to interactive 'play' but can be undertaken in age appropriate ways.

### **Intensive Interaction at Ysgol Crug Glas**

Whilst elements of the Intensive Interaction approach are incorporated in different ways across the curriculum at Ysgol Crug Glas, it has been identified as being particularly appropriate for some pupils. The Referral Criteria (see below) are used to assess suitability, and if it is thought appropriate individual sessions are timetabled. Teachers and other staff work with the pupil, sharing their observations and writing up sessions in a single file. The role of the Teaching Assistant in implementing or supporting Intensive Interaction is very important.



### **Aims of Intensive Interaction**

The aim of Intensive Interaction is to teach the fundamentals of communication, i.e. things which are usually learnt during the first year by a naturally developing infant. These include:

- Enjoying being with another person
- Developing the ability to attend to that person
- Concentration and attention span
- Sharing personal space and giving and receiving touch
- Using and understanding facial expressions
- Taking turns in exchanges of behaviour
- Using vocalisations with meaning
- Having fun, enjoying life

### **Referral Criteria**

1. Children whose communicative development is at a preverbal level.
2. Children who have difficulty engaging with others and in interactive play
3. Children considered to be on the autistic spectrum
4. Children with challenging behaviour arising from their communication difficulties
5. Children who find working in groups difficult

### **Record Keeping**

Before a pupil begins Intensive Interaction sessions a profile of his communicative abilities is taken, by asking several staff members who know the child well to answer a simple questionnaire. This exercise is repeated annually and the results filed in the pupil's Intensive Interaction file kept in his classroom.

After every session the staff member who has been working with the pupil fills in a prompted record sheet recording any changes or significant events. These are kept in the same file.

At each Annual Statement Review for a pupil receiving Intensive Interaction a brief report is provided.