

# The Sensory Volume Programme

Judi Allan. Sommerville School

*'We live in a multisensory world in which we are surrounded by sights, smells, sounds, tastes and tactile phenomena and the way in which we experience these stimuli help us to develop an understanding of our environment'*

Mount and Cavery



This is the basis on which this programme was developed.

## Background

The Sensory Volume programme was created following attendance at a 'Clonker Board' workshop led by Naomi Rosenberg. Clonker Boards are also known as Resonance Boards. In the Sensory Volume programme we turn a Clonker/Resonance Board upside down and use as a giant tray to roll, balls, marbles, autumn leaves, pine cones etc. In fact, anything you can think of!

Flo Longhorns' 'Sensory Workout' (2007) provided additional ideas to support and expand the programme. The aim of the Sensory Workout is to awaken the seven sensory systems of

- Vision
- Touch
- Sound
- Smell
- Taste
- Proprioceptive (movement and body maps)
- Vestibular (balance, position and body parts)

and to build a suitcase of pre requisites to learning skills. They are to

- Look and attend
- Control movements
- Relate to oneself, others and the world around
- Communicate
- Anticipate
- Use a working memory
- Learn through pleasurable and multi sensory experiences



## Curriculum Links

Many students with PMLD and Complex Needs will be working on the pre-requisite skills throughout their lives and a sensory approach to the curriculum is necessary in assisting this group of learners to make sense of their world. The Key Competencies Pathway provides a framework by which we can plan and measure small steps in progress and create meaningful learning experiences.

Judi Allan. Developmental teacher. Sommerville Special School.

## The Sensory Volume Programme

The Sensory Volume programme can be adapted to create and make different learning contexts accessible to our students. For example, a unit on the Seasons can involve:

- Music related to a season e.g. autumn  
Elements in quantity of leaves, flowers, flax, water, umbrellas, floating canopies of colour
- Sensory Volume programmes can be used with students with special needs of different ages and abilities.

## Introducing Sensory Volume

This is a basic programme to introduce the concept of Sensory volume to students and adults;



### Aims

- To provide students with an opportunity to explore sensory elements around their whole body
- To enable students to have ownership of their own learning
- To learn to relate sensory elements to a particular piece of music
- To engage, anticipate and indicate their preferences
- To begin to understand that a programme has a beginning and an end
- To increase length of engagement time.

### Organisation

- Students seated in a group around a Clonker/Resonance Board or table where there is no adult focus.
- Adults to be positioned behind the students and intervention kept to a minimum
- Adult talking/ direction to be kept to a minimum
- Organise resources needed for the session

### Process

Teacher greets the students

### Warm Up

- Play music track (Same each week). Make sure the music is related to the Sensory Volume activity e.g. Black and Yellow music and black and yellow sensory objects.
- Put 'Black and Yellow' sensory objects on the table in front of the students.
- Adults may need to role model to support students to engage in their learning

## Build Up

### Silver blankets.

The Abba Collection Disc 2: Music: Adante No 4

Put blankets on the table. Two adults float a silver blanket over the students to create a canopy



### Bubble Wrap

Put Bubble Wrap on the table. Two adults float a silver blanket to create a canopy over the students.

The Abba Collection Disc 2: Music: Adante No 5



### Shredded Paper

Music: Songs of Grease: Zorba

Put Shredded Paper on the table. Adult can shake some over and around the students. When the music 'speeds up' put paper away. Encourage students to help. It is not compulsory.



## Calming Down

### Parachute

Music: Secret Garden: Hymn to Hope No 3

- Place parachute on table for students to feel.
- Adults to float parachute over the students



### Assessment

- Use of film, photographs and observations.

## Sensory Volume at Somerville School

We introduced Sensory Volume in 2010 and have developed it further in 2011 as a multisensory approach to accessing students to the curriculum.

Here are some of our recommendations:

- Identify appropriate times for intervention. Give students time to respond to the sensory stimuli.
- Make sure you have a piece of music related to each element of sensory volume.
- Focus on the positive elements of the programme. Not all students will remain seated and engaged for the full programme.
- Reduce length of time for activity if necessary.
- Change some elements of the programme and keep some the same to enable students to build on what they are familiar with.
- Look for positive responses from students to their engagement with the sensory stimuli. For example, looking and waiting