

The Impact and Benefits of Therapeutic Interaction on Educational and Behavioural Outcomes

Ange Anderson, Ysgol Pen Coch, UK
Andrea Edwards, Ysgol Pen Coch, UK
Chris Mason, Ysgol Pen Coch, UK
Hazel Hughes, Ysgol Pen Coch, UK
Lynne Harkin, Ysgol Pen Coch, UK

The Asian Conference on Education 2015
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

‘In many educational settings and contexts throughout the world, there remains an assumption that teachers are the possessors of knowledge which is to be imparted to students, and that this happens in neutral, impartial and objective ways. However, learning is about making meaning’ (IAFOR 2015) For students with learning difficulties this is especially so and for them to be in the right frame of mind to learn is crucial. Often students with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties have to overcome barriers to learning such as physical pain or emotional turmoil. For students with learning difficulties this is especially so and for them to be in the right frame of mind to learn is crucial. Often students with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties have to overcome barriers to learning such as physical pain or emotional turmoil. At Pencoch Special school therapists work alongside teachers to deliver therapeutic intervention in order to enable students to be better able to access the curriculum. The school delivers 17 different therapies. The school has been researching the impact of therapeutic intervention on student’s behaviour and on their educational targets. This paper will share data and reports from therapists that illustrate the impact and benefits of therapeutic interaction on educational and behavioural outcomes. Sometimes the impact is qualitative and sometimes it is quantitative. The aim of the paper is to demonstrate how we can encourage learning for those who find learning most difficult.

iafor

The International Academic Forum
www.iafor.org

Introduction

Pupils

All pupils had severe learning difficulties and received therapy for at least two school terms.

The majority of the pupils also had ASD. Some pupils had physical disabilities.

Session: 40 mins at least once a week. Aim: Child led. No requirement for them to produce a finished piece of work. Any work that is created is displayed with the pupil's permission.

Targets: Individual and taken from Individual Education Plans (IEPs), usually related to communication or personal and social skills and well-being.

Assessment : Routes for Learning (RfL) P levels (B Squared) and CASPA (online assessment tool) are used. Therapist evaluates work& records observations. Targets are said to be achieved if they occurred naturally on a minimum of three occasions. Therapist shares observations directly with the class teachers weekly and this is inputted into the school assessment tool.

Impact

Data provided by therapist in Music

Pupil	Number of Targets	Achieved Outright	Targets ongoing	Diagnosis
CL	2	2		SLD
TB	3	2	1	PMLD
LH	1	1		PMLD
MW	1	1		PMLD
ME	2	2		PMLD
LI	1	1		PMLD
EB	4	3	1	PMLD
LR	2	1	1	PMLD
DB	3	1	2	PMLD

Positive feedbacks from both pupils and parents

Requests to continue receiving the therapy once course is completed

There is always a waiting list for places.

Development of emotional literacy using different genres of music and activities.

Empowers pupils to progress and make decisions at their own pace

Development of self-esteem and general well-being

Example 1

Over a three month period. Significant improvement in behaviour resulted in MB choosing to reintegrate into the classroom environment. Minimal therapeutic intervention at present helps to maintain his positive behaviour within school.

Example 2

JN, a school refuser with challenging behaviour from mainstream started at YPC and received this therapy immediately. He performed at the Xmas concert that year

choosing to play the electronic keyboard. Minimal behaviour problems as a direct result of receiving this therapy.

Data provided by therapist in Art

Receptive Communication	Expressive Communication	PSHE including Citizenship and Self Help	Creative Development/ Art & Design	Physical Development/ Fine Motor	Maths
11	12	15	8	3	2

Pupil	Number of Targets	Achieved Outright	Targets ongoing	Diagnosis
EG	5	3	2	ASD
EM	5	5		ASD
LW	7	6	1	SLD
MF	4	3	1	SLD
TO	4	4		PMLD
JH	6	6		ASD
MO	5	4	1	ASD
LG	5	4	1	ASD
IP	5	3	2	ASD
CS	5	3	2	SLD

Progress made in Areas of:

All the pupils attending come willingly when offered a choice.

84% of the targets set have been achieved outright

Targets not achieved yet relate to pupils who are only part of the way through their set of sessions.

Positive feedback received to date from parents and staff

Waiting list for places.

Example 1

M.O. was referred because she frequently chooses to be non-communicative and has difficulty relating to adult requests in class and at home. By her third session she was smiling and speaking freely in the Art Room. She responds to suggestions in a positive manner and has complied with all requests. She now asks and answers questions during her sessions. She is reported as being more communicative on her return to class, and has told them about her experiences.

Other Examples

J.H. said “I wished it was my day in the Art Room yesterday because I was really upset”. The parents of T.O., who is non-verbal, reported that he said “paint” at home, and now uses his paints all the time. He is happy and relaxed when painting. E.G. does not usually show distinction between the adults working with her yet she acknowledged the Art Teacher and has smiled and said hello during sessions. M.F. experienced an emotional crisis before one of his sessions but relaxed in order to attend session.

The class teacher of E.M. reports that he is often more relaxed on his return to class, and counts down the days until he can go again.

DATA Provided by TACPAC therapist

Pupil	Number of Targets	Achieved Outright	Targets ongoing/new	Diagnosis
SB	7	5	2 new	ASD
DB	3	3		PMLD
ME	5	5		PMLD
ED	4	3	1 new	PMLD
PC	7	7		ASD
RD	5	5		ASD
LH	3	2	1	PMLD
LG	3	1	2(absent)	ASD
JR	3	2	1	SLD

All pupils attending have been able to show preferences for object and piece of music they want

90% of targets achieved outright

Positive feedback from staff and parents. Waiting list for places.

Pupil with ASD making major steps in learning since attending TACPAC sessions

Another pupil with ASD has begun to count whilst attending TACPAC

Pupil with ASD has begun giving eye contact, signing 'Hello' and making vocalisations

Pupil with ASD has shown noticeable decrease anxiety levels

Pupil with ASD now leading therapist to session room

Pupil who is tactile defensive is now reaching out to objects and holding them for short periods Pupil with PMLD showing lower heart rate and higher saturation levels after sessions

Pupil with PMLD responding with relaxed limbs, opening hands and giving increased eye contact

DATA provided by therapist in Play

Target records for JH

Term	SDQ parent	SDQ teacher	IEP/IBP	Recorded incidents
autumn	33	17	Achieved	6
spring	33	15	Achieved	0
summer	31	13	Achieved	1(see notes)
results	-2	-4	100%	-5 (see notes)

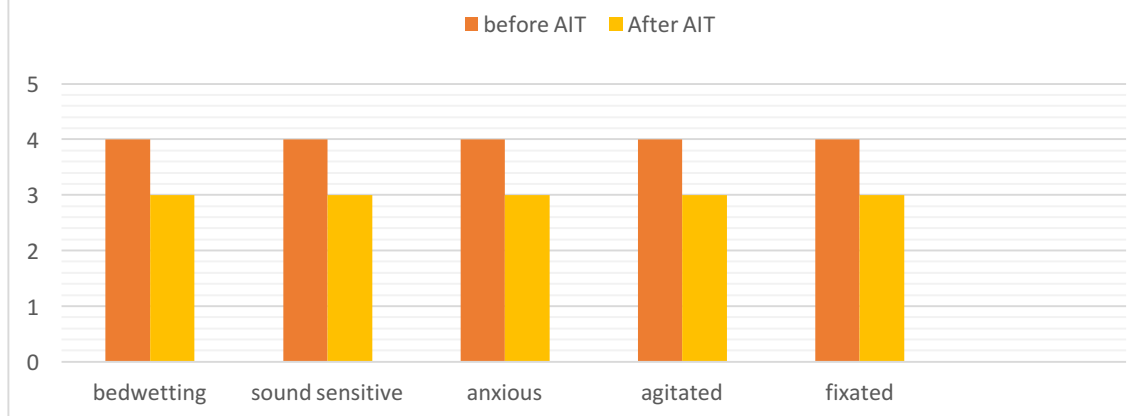
NOTES

The only recorded incident since starting Therapeutic play was in the summer term, when investigated this incident happened after the two week Easter break and due to a training day there wasn't a play session that week.

DATA provided by auditory integration therapist

Parent feedback on effects of AIT 3 months after treatment

1= No problem 2= minor problem 3= moderate problem 4= serious problem
S.H.



We have been using AIT since April 2015 and due to its intense nature have only seen 3 pupils to date. However, the impact reported by both school staff and parents is very positive and there is statistical evidence to back this up.

One excited Mum contacted the AIT assistant to say that her son is “speaking so much more, pointing things out when he is watching tv programmes, requesting things, making much more observations than he did previously and following instructions better”. She said she is certain that the AIT is the cause of the improvements.

Recommendations

There is a need for a moderation panel to be set up to oversee recommendations for therapies and to monitor the therapies effectiveness. There is a need for the regular delivery of comprehensive and standardised Psychological and Mental Health summative and formative assessments.

Suggestions for Future Research

There is a need for a systematic research study into the use of therapies across state maintained special schools: Researchers must determine empirically the educational and social-emotional impacts of therapeutic intervention on students.

Contact email: Angelique_Anderson@flintshire.gov.uk