

TRANSCRIPT: ICT focus group

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Some people see ICT as a computer but, basically, anything that is electrical or battery operated, to us, is ICT. We have a wealth of resources.

Creating the right atmosphere for a session is really important. By using lots of additional props and resources can really make the story come alive. The use of lighting and music is also very important and the fact that the students are very much part of the story, that they are exploring what's happening. Working with children with PMLD, you need to think about the language that you're using, chunk your vocabulary and keep your requests simple, but allow lots of time for the student to process the request and to respond, which is why I always put the aim of the session in my focus groups as part of the song.

So in that story we were able to use the *Soundbeam*, which is a piece of equipment that is activated by movement. The students do have very limited movement but it would enable them to produce a sound, literally, by the blink of an eye or you can use switches as we used in our session today, and they can be activated using the head, the hand or the feet. And it's really knowing your student and knowing how they are going to activate those switches and, more importantly, what sorts of sounds are going to get the best response for them and want to motivate them to activate those switches again and again. It's no use getting somebody to operate a switch if the end result means nothing to them.

Tania's target is to anticipate actions and events. So, throughout the session, I was looking for Tania to give me some indication as to if she knew what was going to happen next and if something happened, what was her reaction. We got a lovely reaction from her when the meteor was heading for earth, where she'll screw her face up and turned away. That was really lovely, and the fact that she frequently uses splints on her arms means that her accessibility is limited, which is why we used the switch with her foot today.

Tania can be very difficult to reach and, sometimes, the only way that you can get a reaction from Tania is to be over the top, to do things within her personal space. If Tania didn't enjoy what we were doing, she would vocalise her response to say that she didn't enjoy it.

Ben has very limited movement in his hands. Although we are working on getting him to use one of his hands to activate a switch, it's a very, very long process and it takes Ben an awful long time to process the request to get his hand to move, which is why, through lots of assessment, we've decided that the best, most accessible way of using the switch for Ben is to use a head switch.

Ben's target is to use ICT with intention, which is why the switch is placed on his right hand side. He tends to list towards the left so that would mean he would operate a

switch unintentionally by just resting in that position. So by putting it on his right side, he really has to control the muscles in his neck to aim towards the switch.

At the end of my sessions, I like to use song to re-cap on the aim of the session and celebrating what the student has achieved in that session.

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