

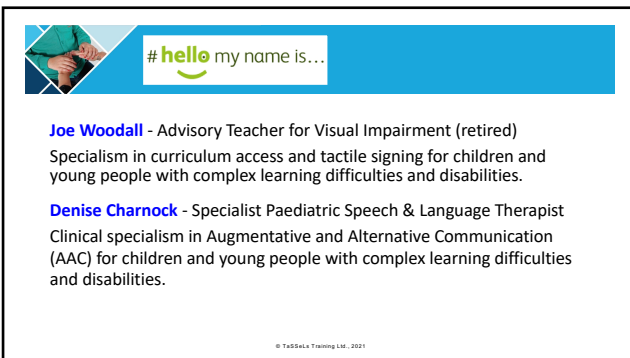


TaSSeLs
Tactile Signing for Sensory Learners

Kommunikationskarnevalen – Studio Karneval
 15 April 2021

© TaSSeLs Training Limited, 2021

1



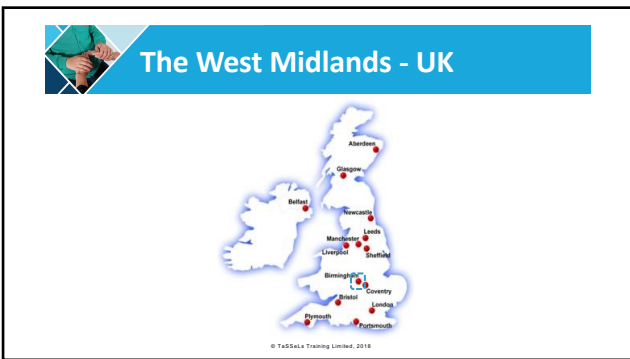
#hello my name is...

Joe Woodall - Advisory Teacher for Visual Impairment (retired)
 Specialism in curriculum access and tactile signing for children and young people with complex learning difficulties and disabilities.


Denise Charnock - Specialist Paediatric Speech & Language Therapist
 Clinical specialism in Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) for children and young people with complex learning difficulties and disabilities.

© TaSSeLs Training Ltd., 2021

2





The West Midlands - UK



© TaSSeLs Training Limited, 2018

3


 **Session aims** 

To introduce the TaSSeLs communication system and the resource materials by:

- Providing an overview of some key principles to using TaSSeLs
- Demonstrating the three approaches
- Looking briefly at the supporting resources that are included within the TaSSeLs resource
- Learning how TaSSeLs has been implemented in Sweden.

© TaSSeLs Training Limited, 2021


4

 **What is TaSSeLs?**

- A system of **touch cues** to aid understanding
- Designed to **support** the early stages of communication
- **Three approaches** to address the specific needs of different learners
- **Alerts** the learner that *something* is about to happen
- Made up of a core vocabulary of everyday words used in **daily routines** and **frequently occurring** activities

© TaSSeLs Training Limited, 2021


5

 **Why was TaSSeLs developed?**

- Learners making limited or no progress with other communication systems
- Complex learning disabilities, some of whom also have a visual impairment
- Required additional sensory feedback i.e. tactile cues
- Nothing else that was suitable

© TaSSeLs Training Limited, 2021

6




How was TaSSeLs developed?

- Multi-agency approach to teaching and learning in school
- Liaison with the Royal Blind School, Edinburgh
- Initially trialled a small number of signs with specific children in our own school
- Working party to develop more signs
- Pilot project - Sandwell, Coventry and Shrewsbury
- Published 2012 (UK) – Swedish translation 2015

© TaSSeLs Training Limited, 2021

7




Evidence base for TaSSeLs

- **Touch** is a vital channel of communication for learners at the earliest developmental levels
- It is the first sense we acquire as infants; we begin receiving tactile signals even before birth
- Learners with the most profound needs are *'constantly being touched, turned, handled, and placed in a variety of positions'* (Langhorn, 1988)
- *'Touch offers individuals with significant multiple disabilities access to communication'* (Goold and Hummell 1993)
- *'Using the sense of touch may be challenging to us as sighted and hearing individuals. We must think about the child's experience of the world and find ways to enhance the use of the child's tactile sense in all the activities we do'* (Moss, 2005)

© TaSSeLs Training Limited, 2021

8



Evidence base for TaSSeLs

BUT...we are working with vulnerable children and young people

- Touch cues need to be *appropriate* whatever the age of the learner
- Value and respect the learner as an individual
- If physical contact between the adult and the learner does not take place, then the result is likely to be *'people's basic needs not being met'* (Hewett, 2008)

SO....

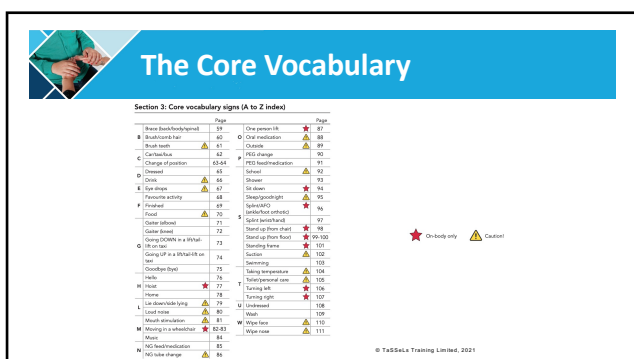
- Sensitive areas of the body were avoided
- Any physical support and guidance offered did not control or restrain the learner at any time
- All Core Vocabulary signs and descriptions met Safeguarding approval
- Provides a 'life-long' communication system!

© TaSSeLs Training Limited, 2021

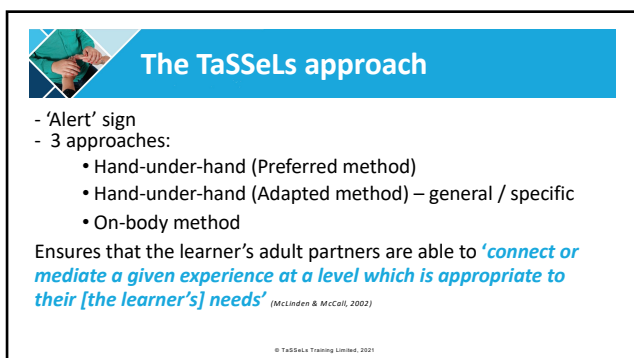
9



10



11



12

Hand-under-hand (Preferred) method

- Non-controlling - the learner can withdraw their hands at any time
'Inappropriately guiding a child's hands can disturb or interrupt their early development' (McLinden & McCall, 2002)
- Promotes the learner's fullest participation and interaction and encourages shared attention rather than passivity
'Mental activity is considered to be more likely to occur when the child is actively involved...than when the child is passive' (Exner & Henderson, 1995)

© TaddSaxa Training Limited, 2021

13

'Alert'







© TaddSaxa Training Limited, 2021

14

Other considerations

Sensory thresholds → Occupational Therapy

Movement difficulties → Physiotherapy

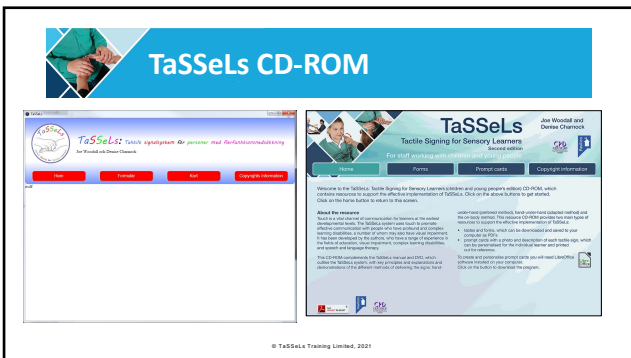
<p>Sensitive to stimuli</p> <p>Learner has low threshold to sensory stimuli and sometimes can't tolerate them. They appear anxious, hyperactive and easily distracted.</p> 	<p>Sensation avoiding</p> <p>Learner has low threshold to sensory stimuli and sometimes can't tolerate them. They appear anxious, hyperactive and easily distracted. They may appear withdrawn, may have anxiety, avoid situations and may have trouble to help organize their sensory input.</p> 
<p>Poor registration</p> <p>Learner needs a high level of sensory stimulation to focus through. They do not seek out the sensory input and can appear uninterested, tired and self-absorbed.</p> 	<p>Sensation seeking</p> <p>Learner needs a high level of sensory stimulation to focus through. They do not seek out the sensory input and can appear uninterested, tired and self-absorbed. They may appear restless and they have no fear of danger.</p> 

© TaddSaxa Training Limited, 2021

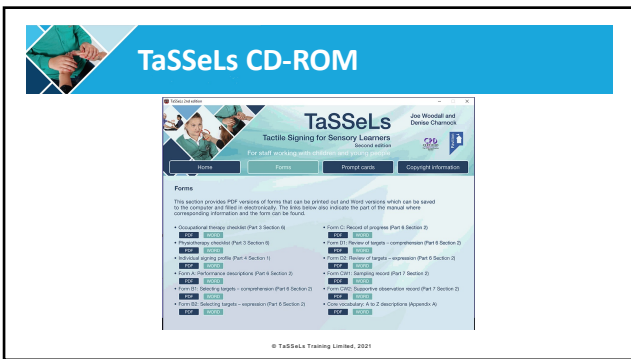
15



16



17



18

Prompt cards on the CD-ROM

19

Prompt cards on the CD-ROM

With the hands together at the centre of the body (palms facing down), move the hands outwards horizontally then bring them back together to touch at the centre of the body

Finished/stop

20

Individual signing profile

- Provides a record of *all* the signs being used with a learner
- Can be included in IEPs or personal Communication Passports

= CONSISTENCY!!

21

Achieving consistency

- CW1 sampling record
- CW2 Supportive observation record

© TaSSeLs Training Limited, 2021

22

Target setting

- Comprehension targets - P1 to P4
- Expression targets - P3 to P4

'A small change to the communication skills of a person with multiple disabilities has the potential to change their whole lives' (Kelly, 2000)

© TaSSeLs Training Limited, 2021


23

TaSSeLs in Sweden

- The TaSSeLs method fills a void - finally there is a structured method for communicating with people having severe-profound intellectual disabilities. We have missed that!
- Our experience is that the method helps a person to be prepared, and thereby calmer and curious, when knowing what will happen!
- Today there are some professionals in Sweden who have completed a 3-day training course and can supervise a team that work with a person who can benefit from TaSSeLs. Our hope is that in the future this course also will be available in Swedish.

Eva Holmqvist – Occupational Therapist, DART
Specialist i arbetsterapi inom habilitering och funktionshinderomsorg

24



TaSSeLs in the UK


Anecdotal evidence suggests:

- the quality of the interactions between the learner and their communication partners has been strengthened
- shared interactions have become more meaningful, and they take place more frequently
- Communication partners have become more confident in their interactions and in interpreting the communicative behaviours of their learners.

Oxfordshire research project:
<http://www.aacsig.org.uk/sites/default/files/presentations/Tassels%20Presentation%20-%20final%20version.pdf>

© TaSSeLs Training Limited, 2021

25



Impact of TaSSeLs

She was becoming increasingly resistant to being touched or handled until TaSSeLs was introduced; she now tolerates all her activities.


A welcome bonus of TaSSeLs is that teaching staff trained in the approach increase their general communication skills with this group of pupils.

TaSSeLs has given staff and parents a very meaningful, appropriate and effective way of communicating with children.

Through the use of TaSSeLs, Harrison has developed an understanding of core words.

© TaSSeLs Training Limited, 2021

26

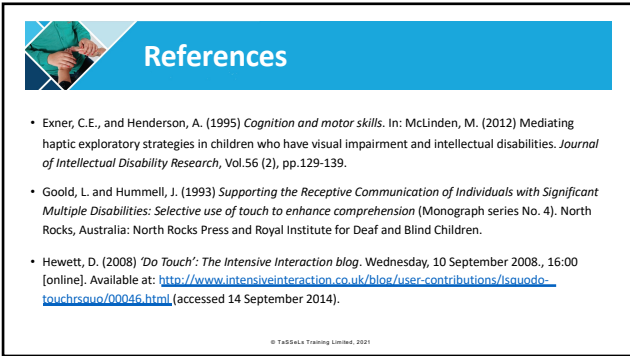


How to contact us

Denise and Joe - Tassels Training Ltd, UK
tasselstactilesigning@gmail.com

Eva Holmqvist - DART, Gothenburg
 Tel: +46 31 342 08 03
 E-mail: eva.holmqvist@vregion.se

27

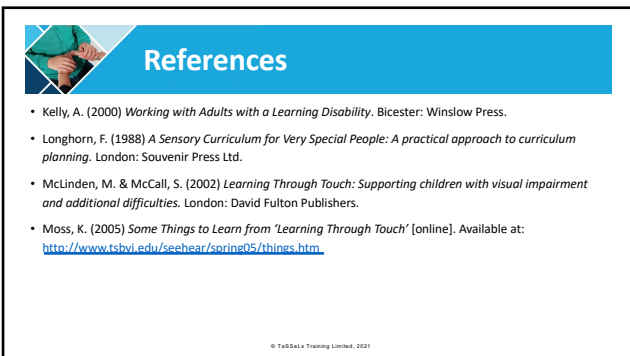


References

- Exner, C.E., and Henderson, A. (1995) *Cognition and motor skills*. In: McLinden, M. (2012) Mediating haptic exploratory strategies in children who have visual impairment and intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, Vol.56 (2), pp.129-139.
- Goold, L. and Hummell, J. (1993) *Supporting the Receptive Communication of Individuals with Significant Multiple Disabilities: Selective use of touch to enhance comprehension* (Monograph series No. 4). North Rocks, Australia: North Rocks Press and Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children.
- Hewett, D. (2008) 'Do Touch': *The Intensive Interaction blog*. Wednesday, 10 September 2008., 16:00 [online]. Available at: <http://www.intensiveinteraction.co.uk/blog/user-contributions/isquoda-touchsquo/00046.html> (accessed 14 September 2014).

© TADSaia Training Limited, 2021

28



References

- Kelly, A. (2000) *Working with Adults with a Learning Disability*. Bicester: Winslow Press.
- Longhorn, F. (1988) *A Sensory Curriculum for Very Special People: A practical approach to curriculum planning*. London: Souvenir Press Ltd.
- McLinden, M. & McCall, S. (2002) *Learning Through Touch: Supporting children with visual impairment and additional difficulties*. London: David Fulton Publishers.
- Moss, K. (2005) *Some Things to Learn from 'Learning Through Touch'* [online]. Available at: <http://www.tsbyvi.edu/seehear/spring05/things.htm>.

© TADSaia Training Limited, 2021

29
