



COMMUNICATION NETWORK UPDATE SERIES

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DbI's Network on Communication and Congenitally Deafblind Persons

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**UPDATE ON THE CONCEPT OF BLENDING IN RELATI-
ON TO
CONGENITAL DEAFBLINDNESS AND THE FORMATION
OF
MEANING IN COMMUNICATIVE INTERACTIONS**

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UPDATE ON THE CONCEPT OF BLENDING IN RELATION TO CONGENITAL DEAFBLINDNESS AND THE FORMATION OF MEANING IN COMMUNICATIVE INTERACTIONS

The DbI Network on communication and congenitally deafblind persons is currently exploring issues relating to formation of meaning in communicative interaction with congenitally deafblind persons.

The conference in Gothenborg 28 August – 1st September 2002 addressed two concepts relating directly to this issue: narratives and blending. The group has explored these concepts for some time already. At this conference experts from the scientific world were present and brought in more knowledge, thus enabling explorations in depth.

The concept of narrative

The concept of narrative was already addressed in a previous expert meeting and international course (Paris 1999). It was very clearly demonstrated how it can be transformed to practice by Gunnar Vege in his presentation of the video recordings of deafblind girl, teacher and crab. It was demonstrated that it is the responsibility of the adult to monitor the emotional tension, so that the experience takes on a narrative quality.

We think it is worthwhile to focus narrative units and narrative spiralling of events on three levels, an overall life-story level, the level of conversations and level of micro-analysis (like a Russian doll – the mind and the personhood are spun by narratives within narratives and narratives about narratives).

The concept of blending

The concept of blending is currently the major focus of the working group. This concept will be addressed in more detail in the future meetings of the group.

We feel that the working group has got very interesting and promising views and information to go on with this concept. It will require some time to clarify exactly how the concept may best be related to the previous conceptual framework that we have been building up on blending and communicative interaction (Paris conference 2001).

There are a number of arguments why we should go on to work to work with the concept of blending in more detail:

- the concept can be a companion for the adventure of exploration in relation to meaning and mind
- the concept of blending as worked on in Gothenborg conference is coherent with the concept of bodily emotional traces (BETs) as worked on in Paris (cf. CNUS: The Formation of Meaning)
- we expect that the congenital deafblindness may bring solid grounding to the concept of blending

- the concept brings us closer to the complex building up of the congenitally deafblind person's mind as a variation of the human mind
- the concept gives a tool to analyse the units and logical levels of the mind, and for exploring this complex interconnectedness between different mental spaces and the pieces that are contained in them.

How we understand blending at the moment

- the concept of blending explains how the mind is transforming experience into mental spaces and
- how these spaces are interconnected so that we by playing around with these spaces may make variations of meaning

Blending and ethics

- the concept of blending displays that the congenitally deafblind person's mind is a variation of the human minds, and gets rid of the need to maintain a concept of normality - deviance
- it points to the singularity of the mind (one of a kind) and its richness
- it highlights the fact that congenitally deafblind persons bring in extreme variations and vulnerability, but do not change the system.

Ecological validity

The ecological validity of the system was proved, because given adequate data, the invited experts were able to analyse interactions with congenitally deafblind persons to a level much more refined and enriched than we have done it ourselves (based on personal knowledge even), and in a very credible way.



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