

THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA

Report by Belinda McDonald

2008 Churchill Fellow

To further develop my understanding in relation to the MOVE (Mobility Opportunities Via Education) curriculum and research opportunities for implementation in Queensland.

I understand that the Churchill Trust may publish this Report, either in hard copy or on the internet or both, and consent to such publication.

I indemnify the Churchill Trust against any loss, costs or damages it may suffer arising out of any claim or proceedings made against the Trust in respect of or arising out of the publication of any Report submitted to the Trust and which the Trust places on a website for access over the internet.

I also warrant that my Final Report is original and does not infringe the copyright of any person, or contain anything which is, or the incorporation of which into the Final Report is, actionable for defamation, a breach of any privacy law or obligation, breach of confidence, contempt of court, passing-off or contravention of any other private right or of any law.

Signed: Belinda McDonald

Dated: 16.09.2009

INDEX

ITEM	PAGE
Introduction.....	1
Executive Summary.....	2
Fellowship Programme.....	4
Conclusions.....	7
Recommendations.....	7

INTRODUCTION

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship has allowed me to travel to the United States of America to further develop my understanding in relation to the MOVE (Mobility Opportunities Via Education) curriculum and research opportunities for implementation with students with multiple impairments and fragile health conditions within a Queensland context. I am very grateful to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust for providing me with this once in a lifetime opportunity to investigate opportunities to enhance the quality of life for students with physical and multiple impairments and their families. It was an extremely valuable experience for me as a young professional – it not only increased my knowledge in the area of physical impairment, it also inspired me to be brave, creative and confident in my practice as a special educator.

This journey would not have been possible without the help and support of my family. I am eternally grateful for your tireless assistance in organising, helping with stress management and believing in me! I am also grateful to the staff of the Churchill Trust for your invaluable advice and support. I would like to extend thanks to Linda Bidabe, Dave Schreuder and the staff of MOVE International. My fellowship program was one of value, inspiration and fun. Dave, your tireless effort to assist me in any way possible to make this fellowship a reality is greatly appreciated.

Thank you to the staff and students of the MOVE Model Sites I have visited. I feel very privileged to have staff and students welcome me into their school and share their success stories, reflections and provide advice. I had many fun experiences including taking a ride on a mechanical school horse and a very competitive Australia vs. USA game of musical circles (Australia won!). I wish to also thank Rifton Equipment for taking the time to demonstrate and discuss your equipment as well as Professor Keith Whinnery and Associate Professor Stacie Whinnery for sharing their knowledge, enthusiasm and generosity.

Finally, thank you to the students, families and staff of Woody Point State Special School. Your courage and determination have been my biggest inspiration.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Belinda McDonald

Teacher

80 Billabong Place, Parkinson, QLD 4115

Ph: 0418415154 W: (07) 3480 4333

E: bmcd123@eq.edu.au

E: belle_afb@hotmail.com

Project description:

The purpose of my fellowship was to further develop my understanding in relation to the MOVE (Mobility Opportunities Via Education) curriculum and research opportunities for implementation in a Queensland context with students with multiple impairments and fragile health conditions. In order to achieve this goal I travelled to the United States of America to attend a MOVE Site Trainer course in order to assist in training other professionals and families working with students with multiple impairments in Queensland. I also had the opportunity to visit MOVE model school sites in order to observe successful implementation of the MOVE curriculum in a variety of contexts. As part of my fellowship program I visited Rifton Equipment to become more familiar with equipment used within the MOVE program and aspects to consider when choosing suitable equipment in relation to both practicality and affordability. I concluded my fellowship with a visit to Associate Professor Stacie Whinnery and Professor Keith Whinnery at the University of West Florida to discuss current research in the area of physical impairment and their research and findings in relation to the implementation of the MOVE curriculum.

Highlights:

- Attending the MOVE Site Trainer course where I was able to consolidate my knowledge of MOVE, gain strategies for training others and train within a group of professionals committed to enhancing the mobility of students with physical impairments and their families.
- Meeting D. Linda Bidabe and hearing her reflections on her journey as a teacher, MOVE author and advocate for students with physical impairments.

- Visiting a variety of special education settings and learning many valued lessons from their staff and students.
- Witnessing the high expectations teachers and therapists' have of their students and the high expectations students have of themselves.
- Having students spontaneously request to show me how they can use their mobility equipment using augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices, followed by them telling me about their positive movement experiences using their preferred AAC strategies.
- Meeting staff at Rifton Equipment and observing the process involved in creating mobility equipment that promotes independence and practicality for both clients and their carers.
- Visiting Professor Keith Whinnery and Associate Professor Stacie Whinnery at the University of West Florida. Their generosity in sharing with me their research, insights and invaluable advice will greatly benefit my practice as both a MOVE Site Trainer and special educator.

Lessons and conclusions:

- It is vital for teachers of students with profound multiple impairments to have high expectations for their students, in relation to their current repertoire of mobility skills and those in which they have the potential to acquire.
- Intrinsic motivation and self-determination are powerful components of skill acquisition.
- A collaborative approach is an essential component in implementing the MOVE program. Collaborative teams that are supported within a whole school approach that is committed to providing staff training and necessary equipment have the potential to implement the MOVE curriculum effectively.
- Students with profound multiple impairments have the right to a challenging and stimulating curriculum that promotes not only skill acquisition, but skill progression.

Implementation and Dissemination:

- Implement the MOVE curriculum within my current class setting.
- Begin the process of planning for whole school implementation of the MOVE curriculum at Woody Point Special School based on the findings of my fellowship report.
- Provide MOVE Basic Provider Training to teachers, therapists, nurses, paraprofessionals, families/caregivers and school administrators within Woody Point State Special School and other settings working with students experiencing physical impairments.
- Raise awareness within Education Queensland of the potential benefits associated with the adoption of the MOVE curriculum as part of implementing a supports based curriculum with students with multiple impairments.
- Establish a MOVE interest group among professionals and families to promote the sharing of knowledge, experiences and problem solving amongst participants.
- Provide support to other professionals implementing the MOVE curriculum within Australia via direct contact.
- Maintain communication with key contacts within the United States to keep up to date with current practices and developments within both MOVE International and the area of physical impairment.
- Information regarding the MOVE curriculum and my experiences as a Churchill Fellow to also be disseminated through public presentations to professional organisations including universities, outside therapy agencies and community organisations.
- Educate and involve the wider community in facilitating and financing aspects of the MOVE curriculum. Thus, promoting the mobility rights of people experiencing physical and multiple impairments within our community.



FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

Los Angeles, California, USA

- James J. McBride Special School, MOVE Model Site
- Meeting with Tim Bays (Principal) and Linda S. (Special Educator and MOVE Site Trainer)
- In class observations with Linda S. and Janet (Special Educators and MOVE Site Trainers)

Bakersfield, California, USA

- MOVE Site Trainer Course
- Met a variety of MOVE Site Trainers from the USA, UK (MOVE Europe) and New Zealand.
- Meeting with D. Linda Bidabe (Creator of the MOVE curriculum) and Patti LaBouff (MOVE International Trainer)
- Blair Learning Centre, MOVE Model Site
- In class observations with Carmentia, Tahleia and Linda (Special Educators & MOVE Site Trainers)
- Meeting with David Shreuder (CEO MOVE International)

Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA

- Iowa Area Centre, Move Model Site
- Meeting with Roger Burma (Physical Therapist)

New Paltz, New York, USA

- Rifton Equipment
- Meeting with John Rhodes (CEO Rifton Equipment)
- Meeting of Rifton Equipment staff and tour of premises

New Jersey, USA

The Jardine Academy – Union Campus

- Meeting with Laura Del Duca (Principal)
- In class observations with Colleen (MOVE Site Trainer) and Kym
- In class observations of a variety of classes implementing the MOVE curriculum with students experiencing profound multiple impairments and fragile health conditions
- Question and answer sessions with Occupational Therapist and Physical Therapists
- Participating in team days
- Observing MOVE special events days e.g., Jardine Idol (students performing dance and song for their peers whilst implementing their MOVE program e.g., dancing to their favourite music whilst using mobility equipment that promotes weight bearing).

The Jardine Academy – Cranford Campus

- Meeting with Stephanie (Music Therapist & MOVE Site Trainer)
- Observing and participating in MOVE sessions with a variety of class groups led by Stephanie.
- Observation of group sessions led by multi-disciplinary team (OT, PT & S&LP)
- In class observations of a variety of classes implementing the MOVE curriculum with students experiencing profound multiple impairments and fragile health conditions.
- Observations and discussions with registered nurse and teaching staff in relation to implementing the MOVE curriculum with students with fragile health conditions, specifically in relation to epilepsy and respiratory health.

Pensacola, Florida, USA

- University of West Florida, Pensacola
- Meetings with Keith and Stacie Whinnery, University of West Florida

Mobility Opportunities Via Education:

MOVE (Mobility Opportunities Via Education) is a curriculum designed for students with physical and multiple impairments and their families. The MOVE curriculum was designed by D. Linda Bidabe, a special educator in Bakersfield, California who strove to have high expectations of her students and design functional mobility goals that enhance the quality of life for both students and their families. The essence of this curriculum relates to a top down approach to acquiring functional motor skills, moving away from the more traditional developmental approach, therefore students do not require prerequisite skills to participate in MOVE. MOVE promotes the potential of each student to sit, stand and walk and does not rely on skills to develop in a set order. MOVE promotes the use of long term goals and the generalisation of mobility strategies across school, home and community contexts. This curriculum is completely inclusive and does not exclude students with severe multiple impairments. MOVE International advises that students with significant health issues consult their paediatrician or orthopaedic specialist to seek clearance prior to participating.

The MOVE curriculum consists of six steps that include testing, setting goals, task analysis, measuring prompts, reducing prompts and teaching the skills.

- Step one relates to assessing students using the *Top-Down Motor Milestone Test* devised by MOVE International. This is completed in order to establish a baseline of a student's current skills and to inform the design of program goals. Such an assessment is completed by all team members in the form of a parent interview.

- Step two involves the setting of long term goals based on the personal goals of each parent/ carer or student. Such goals relate to activities students have always wanted to participate in but thought were out of their reach, manual handling within the home context and mobility skills students may require in the future.
- Step three within the MOVE curriculum involves team members reviewing a goal and establishing what skills are required in order to achieve the goal.
- Step four requires team members to consider the prompts students will require within their target goal and complete the *Prompt Reduction Plans* created by MOVE International.
- Step five focuses on prompt reduction whereby team members establish which prompts they plan to reduce when student progress is made.
- Step six relates to the teaching of the skills identified within previous steps. Students each require a *MOVE Assessment Profile* in order to record baseline and program data. Such profiles can be purchased from MOVE International.

The MOVE curriculum has also been implemented effectively within post school organisations. A curriculum specifically for post school contexts is currently being written. MOVE International also recently produced a hygiene and toileting program.



Lessons:

- To have high expectations of students with physical and multiple impairments in relation to their current repertoire of mobility skills and those in which they have the potential to acquire. Do not focus on the student's disability or skill deficits.
- Students do not require prerequisite skills to participate in the MOVE program. If a team is unsure about a child's suitability to participate it is advised to consult the student's medical team for clearance.
- Provide a high number of opportunities for students to practice skills related to their mobility goals across the school day. Provide opportunities to generalise such skills within meaningful contexts for both the student and his/ her family.
- Ensure targeted mobility skills are practiced in the form of activities that are meaningful and motivating to each individual student. Intrinsic motivation and self-determination are powerful components of skill acquisition.
- Provide students with the freedom to move. Experimenting and problem solving in relation to student mobility skills promotes motor planning and enhances independence.
- A collaborative approach is an essential component in implementing the MOVE program.

- Families and teachers to advocate for their student's right to try. It is essential to consult the student's medical and therapy team for clearance when trying new equipment.
- Within the settings I visited, numerous benefits relating to increased opportunities for a student to be in an upright position (with or without bearing weight) were reported. Such benefits included the reduction in the number of incontinence pads required, an increase of student bowel movements therefore a reduction in the amount of constipation medication required and the reduction of pressure sores experienced by students. Settings also reported to observe an improvement of student respiratory health, improved general health and weight loss in some students. A reduction in staff manual handling injuries was experienced as was the elimination of some problem behaviours displayed by students. Physical therapists also indicated benefits are also experienced by students in the areas of circulation, bone strength and bone density. Practitioners advocated for students to have the opportunity to be in upright positions for the above reasons, but also to allow students to be at the same height as their peers and promote meaningful participation and communication within real life contexts.



Rifton Equipment displayed at the MOVE International Trainer course.

CONCLUSIONS:

My visit to the United States of America proved extremely valuable in exposing me to a curriculum and related practices that enhance the opportunity for students with profound multiple impairments to participate in a functional curriculum that is meaningful to both themselves and their families. Such a visit has led me to the following conclusions,

- Students with profound multiple impairments have the right to a challenging and stimulating curriculum that promotes not only skill acquisition, but skill progression. This particularly applies to the area of motor skills.
- The MOVE curriculum is a practical approach to teaching functional motor skills within a school setting. The curriculum incorporates strategies advocated within special education literature such as ecological analysis, task analysis and prompt reduction and creates a vehicle to assess, implement and evaluate a mobility centred program without having to compromise on other aspects within the students overall curriculum.
- In order to effectively implement the MOVE curriculum within a setting catering to students with multiple impairments and fragile health conditions a united front is required. Collaborative teams that are supported within a whole school approach that is committed to providing staff training and necessary equipment have the greatest chance at being successful.
- Barriers to implementation will always arise, however as conveyed by Associate Professor Stacie Whinnery (2009), it is vital to remember that change is a process and will not happen overnight.

As indicated previously within this report such conclusions will be disseminated in the form of providing training courses, supporting MOVE practitioners via direct contact, establishing a MOVE interest group and raising the profile of students working towards increased functional mobility within both educational and community contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

In order to promote the successful implementation of the MOVE curriculum with students with multiple impairments and fragile health conditions within Queensland contexts the following recommendations have been made.

- Schools considering implementing the MOVE program to commit to basic provider training and professional development relating to the MOVE program for all persons involved in a student's education. Training should be available to teachers, teacher aides, consulting therapists, school administrators, special teachers, volunteers, nursing staff and families.
- Settings to engage in ongoing review of the implementation of the MOVE curriculum and provide support and related professional development.
- A collaborative team approach to implementing the MOVE program will dramatically increase the potential for success in implementing the MOVE program. Team members are equally valued contributors in all stages within the MOVE program. Teams to promote the involvement of both the caregiver and student.
- Adoption of volunteer programs to allow for an increased frequency of opportunities to practice functional mobility skills across the day e.g., adopt a Grandma program (as demonstrated in Bakersfield). Such programs can also be targeted to promote peer relationships for students with same age peers within both education and community settings.

- Negotiate for prioritization of therapy services to support students and teachers to implement meaningful and safe mobility programs and foster a collaborative approach to educating students with profound multiple disabilities.
- The adoption of team days where possible (as demonstrated in New Jersey). Team days occur when school based therapists involved in the MOVE team spend an entire day working in one classroom in order to be practically involved in implementing and evaluating student MOVE programs within natural contexts. This gives therapists an opportunity to consider practical issues and promotes team building with teaching staff. Such days included physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech and language pathologists.
- Follow up and continued support to staff implementing the MOVE curriculum in order to build practitioner confidence and enhance the practicality of the program within the classroom context. This may occur through individual schools developing a mobility committee in which committee members continue to develop the program school wide and support staff within their setting. It would be vital for administrators, physical education teachers and therapy staff to be involved in this process.
- The creation of a similar, but more informal committee involving parents and carers is also suggested to promote supportive networks and opportunities for skill generalisation within the home environment.
- Make it motivating to MOVE. Settings to review student surroundings – when and where are students motivated to sit, stand and walk? Get creative with the MOVE program by coordinating fun opportunities to MOVE. Opportunities may include school wide challenges and competitions (as demonstrated in New Jersey), mobility fun days and accessing the community using mobility equipment.
- Settings to devise a working model that suits their context. This would allow settings to decide on the expectations of staff in relation to implementation e.g., frequency of goal and data review. Many settings report the sharing of data collection responsibilities between teaching and therapy staff to be most effective.
- Students within Education Queensland settings to access loan resources from the Disabilities Services Support Unit (DSSU) in order to trial mobility equipment to evaluate suitability for individual students.
- Review funding options in relation to schools obtaining mobility equipment that is to be accessed by students focusing on functional mobility goals within their Individual Support Plans.
- Review funding options for students in obtaining mobility equipment for both school and personal use. Avenues to pursue may include private health insurance, grant submissions and private purchases.
- Settings to build partnerships within the community to promote generalisation of mobility skills for students, opportunities for students to participate in community activities in inclusive contexts and dispelling stereotypes within the community relating to the skills of students with multiple impairments.
- Settings to build partnerships with corporate and local business sectors in order to obtain financial assistance in implementing the MOVE program and obtaining suitable equipment.

Reference List:

Kern County Superintendent of Schools (2009). Mobility Opportunities Via Education. United States of America, Kern County Superintendent of Schools.